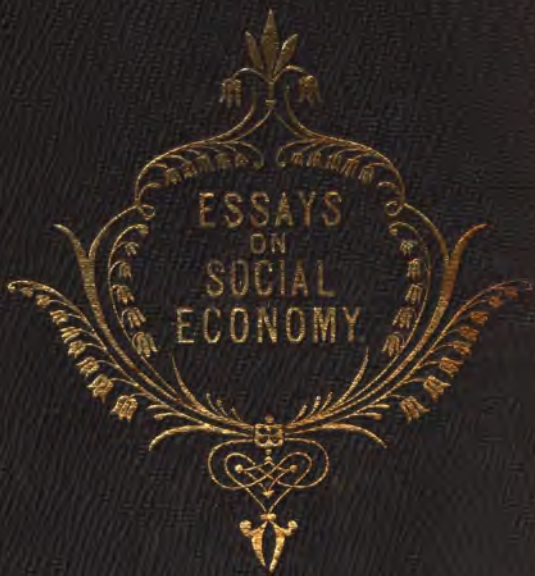
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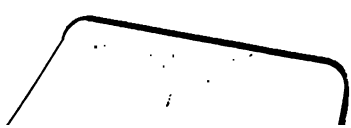

BRIEF ESSAYS

ON

SUBJECTS

OF

SOCIAL ECONOMY.

BY

T. L[illegible]

LONDON: SIMPKIN AND MARSHALL, STATIONER'S COURT.

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PREFACE.

THESE brief Essays were mostly contributed to a Periodical published monthly in the village of Eltham, in Kent, in the years 1854-5.

Reading, as I did, with much satisfaction, the purposes of the "Eltham Journal," as set forth in its first number, it appeared to me to offer a convenient and opportune means of inculcating a better acquaintance with the leading and most important principles of social economy. I felt sure that if I could do this in a manner to engage attention, and to make the subjects themselves more clearly understood and better appreciated, I could not fail to render this unpretending Journal, to some extent, as useful in this respect as it might hope to be in the range of its subjects generally.

I felt also that there could not be any instruction more beneficial to those readers whose education had not conveyed to them such knowledge, nor any occupation more congenial to my own mind than that of communicating to them so much information on those important subjects as the opportunity of leisure had enabled me to acquire for myself.

Taking into review the condition of the working classes of this country, the Eltham Journal commences its career with an effort to explain the causes of that depressed and unimproved condition which characterizes them, notwithstanding that their wages, in many instances, exceed the stipends of Curates in the Established Church, and the average of those of Dissenting Ministers, the pay of Surgeons in the Navy and Army, and the average salaries of Clerks in warehouses and counting-houses, &c., and tracing these to the improvident and otherwise imprudent (and too often depraved) habits of their lives, and these again to that want of christian education or training, as respects the conduct of life, which their own particular position in society as much as possible requires; this Journal shows that, as respects the practical

interests and duties of human life, large masses of the population are, to all intents and purposes, as uncivilized as if they had been born and bred in the very heart of Africa itself. How otherwise, it remarks, are we to account for those intemperate habits in men, which impel them to the coarse, wanton, and cruel assaults on the weaker sex, and in particular on their own wives, which characterize and so shamefully disgrace the operative population of this country at the present time.

Such sad evidence and proof of depraved morality and general bad dispositions and habits of life, could surely not exist if they had been rightly taught to estimate the interests and duties of social life, and made to feel, as they should do, that their welfare, as members of a good and prosperous community, must, to a great extent, depend on the manner in which they apply themselves to render the laws subservient to their own personal welfare.

If in this way people will not help themselves, the best arrangements of society and the wisest legislation, must fail to do so; for, as this Journal most properly and emphatically observes, "self help" lies at the foundation of all human prosperity.

To help, therefore, this small periodical, thus so

well commenced, in furtherance of these views, I wrote the papers which it has been pleased to publish under the initial signature of "T. L.," together with some others under other signatures, as also others besides these, which will be found in the following pages.

My excuse for the reproduction of these Essays in the present form, is the same which at the first impelled me to write them; and if the conviction of their importance should influence others as it has done myself through many past years of my life, I cannot doubt but they will feel as grateful for the instruction thus imparted, as I have long since felt under the deepest sense of obligation to the sources from whence I have derived so much valuable knowledge respecting the duties and obligations of social life.

Happiness is indeed our being's "end and aim;" and it may, perhaps, be expected to be found in various pursuits. Some may place it in "action," others in "ease," and it may be found in neither. But one thing is quite certain respecting the condition of man in this state of society, namely, that however happiness may be sought, either in action or in ease, so much as may be attainable on this

side of the grave, must, in the main, depend on either acting or reposing on those fundamental principles on which alone the prosperity of society itself depends.

These principles comprise the duties and responsibilities of mankind towards one another; and if there were wanting proof of the yet higher authority on which they rest, I do not know what could be more strongly alleged than the fact that when mankind form themselves into the state of civil society, it is absolutely of necessity that they adopt these principles as the foundation on which alone it can be made to subsist. They are the principles of nature, and nature is the work and ordinance of God.

THOMAS LEWIN.

Eltham, October, 1855.

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CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

"He," observes a great writer, [*Hooker's Ecc. Pol.*] "that goeth about to persuade a multitude that they are not so well governed as they ought to be, shall never want attentive and favorable hearers, because they know the manifold defects whereunto every kind of regiment is subject; but the secret lets and difficulties which in public proceedings are innumerable and inevitable, they have not ordinarily the judgment to consider: and because such as openly reprove supposed disorders of state are taken for principal friends to the common benefit of all, and for men that carry singular freedom of mind."

"Under this fair and plausible colour, whatsoever they utter passeth for good and current, and that which wanteth in the weight of their speech is supplied by the aptness of men's minds to accept and believe it."

"Whereas, on the other side, if we maintain things that are established, we have not only to strive with a number of heavy prejudices deeply rooted in the hearts of men, who think that herein we serve the time, and speak in favor of the present state because thereby we either seek or hold preferment, but also to bear such exceptions as minds so averted beforehand usually take against that which they are loth should be poured into them."

A moment's thought, however, must satisfy any person capable of a calm and rational consideration, that the fabric of a great community, and the fundamental laws which sustain it, are not to be estimated by the dissatisfactions of individuals or of small classes of its body politic; for, as this great Author proceeds to remark, "As in the fabric of a stately mansion or the splendour of a majestic tree, that foundation which beareth up the one, that root which ministereth unto the other nourishment and life, is in the bosom of the earth concealed, so, in like manner, all who live under and enjoy the benefit of good laws may do so, albeit, the grounds and first originals from whence they have sprung may be unknown,—as to the greater part of a community they usually are."

When, therefore, as he continues, "they who withdraw their obedience pretend that the laws which they should obey are corrupt and vicious, it behoveth them to search into and examine the very foundation and root, the highest well-spring and fountain of these laws, since thus only can they rightly determine whether that want of prosperity on their own parts, of which they complain, or that seemingly undue prosperity on the parts of others, of which they imagine themselves entitled to participate, is fairly attributable to the inequitable operation of the laws, or whether they may not rather arise out of those contingencies in the arrangements of society which no form of government nor any code of laws, however wisely concerted and rendered duly operative, can by possibility wholly prevent."

But yet more seriously does it behove them to search into and examine with candour their own consciences, with the view of ascertaining whether what they complain of

in the laws, or in their administration, may not, with greater propriety, be chargeable against themselves, in not yielding to them a true and willing obedience; for laws, like all other operative principles, to be estimated and rightly judged of, should be considered not by their particular and apparent effects, but by their real and genuine tendencies; that is, by what they would accomplish if people themselves would but do their own parts in sustaining and rendering them available for all their proper and intended purposes. And he has but an indifferent claim to the character of a good citizen who, in a generally well-settled and prosperous community, seeks to destroy or to derange those institutions under and by virtue of which the great bulk of the people thrive, for no better reason than that he has himself failed or been unwilling to adapt them to the purposes of his own well-doing.

In all the above observations it has been no purpose of the writer to imply that the arrangements of civil society admit of being settled on any basis of finality, such that, in the fluctuations of the social world, they themselves should not require occasional modification and change,—far otherwise: as the circumstances of the world are in a perpetual course of change, and the habits and opinions of people change with them, so it is evident that what may have been suitable and well adapted at one period may have become unsuitable and inexpedient at another.

What, however, I maintain is, that in a well-settled and generally prosperous community, it becomes persons to pause before they charge against the fundamental principles of the social fabric, those evils which, properly considered, may have reference solely to the want of some

reparation in its superstructure. That they should not be too ready to charge against the laws what it may belong to themselves to do, nor forget that the laws, so far from being intended or calculated to supersede and render unnecessary human exertion, were, on the contrary, designed to protect and give a stimulus to it, for it is through the force and instrumentality of the laws alone, in any well-regulated community, that we are enabled to accumulate and retain for our own purposes the produce of our own industry; and lastly, that before people set about to derange and put in risk those essential principles on which the fabric of society is based, they should take due pains to ascertain whether, in fact, they possess a real ability and competency of knowledge to judge of and to estimate them, for, in truth, it does not belong to every body to do this.

"The wisdom of a learned man," as we read in the 38th chapter of the Book of Ecclesiasticus, "cometh by opportunity of leisure, and he that hath little business shall become wise. How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plough and that glorieth in the goad, that driveth oxen and is occupied in their labours, and whose talk is of bullocks? He giveth his mind to make furrows, and is diligent to give the kine fodder. So every carpenter and workmaster that laboureth night and day; and they that cut and grave seals and are diligent to make great variety, and give themselves to counterfeit imagery, and watch to finish a work. The smith also sitting by the anvil and considering the iron work, the vapour of the fire wasteth his flesh and he sigheth with the heat of the furnace; the noise of the hammer and the anvil is ever in his ears, and his eyes look still upon the pattern of the thing that he

maketh: he setteth his mind to finish his work and watcheth to polish it perfectly. So doth the potter, sitting at his work and turning the wheel about with his feet, who is alway carefully set at his work and maketh all his work by number; he fashioneth the clay with his arm, and boweth down his strength before his feet; he applieth himself to lead it over, and is diligent to make clean the furnace."

"All these trust to their hands, and every one is wise in his work. Without these cannot a city be inhabited: and they shall not dwell where they will, nor go up and down. They shall not be sought for in public counsel, nor sit high in the congregation; they shall not sit on the judges' seats, nor understand the sentence of judgment. They cannot declare justice and judgment, and they shall not be found where parables are spoken: but they will maintain the state of the world, and their desire is in the work of their craft."

All this is according to nature and to the reason of things. That a man should be trusted in his particular business or craft *(cuilibet in sua arte credenda)*; that a man should not pretend to judge of matters that are beyond the sphere of his own proper business *(Ne sutor ultra crepidam)*; have long since found their place amongst the admitted maxims of the world: and it would be better if they were yet more strictly observed in the matter of administering the ordinary business of government conformably with existing laws,—a work indeed of equal difficulty and importance, requiring, on the part of those whose training and lives are devoted to the subject, as much peculiar knowledge and skill as the most intricate science in philosophy or the arts, because it

involves all those minute and subtle considerations connected with the rights of man in society, as distinct from his natural rights, and all those considerations of right which connect one society with another, as respects the maintenance of their natural, moral, and political relations.

What then, I would ask, is more reasonable than that they who take pains to acquire a competency in matters of such importance, should claim some confidence on the part of others who have been occupied in other ways. Can anything be more reasonable than that we should in this —as in all other matters—give up to persons whose particular business it may be, the things in which they have taken more pains than ourselves. It would be just as reasonable to suppose that because a man was a good farmer or mechanic he must therefore be a good poet or legislator, as to suppose he must be a good mechanic or farmer because he had approved himself a wise legislator or judge.

And when it is considered that through the infirmity of human nature even the most competent and trustworthy persons are yet liable to err under the various influences which mislead the judgment and corrupt the heart, is it not obvious that in delegating the functions of government to the best qualified persons, the real duty devolving on the rest of the community, consists not, indeed, in obstructing the course of their legislation by unseasonable and ignorant interpositions of popular opinion, whenever the public interests appear to be questionably affected, but in at all times affording them every encouragement and assistance so long as they keep within the line of their duty, and do their best for the public good.

I have thus commenced this paper, because in con-

sidering this most important subject it appears to me that the principles of "general politics,"—those principles, I mean, on which our political rights and our political duties are founded,—have been frequently much more agitated than well understood, and I feel desirous that, with reference to times of social and political unquietness, we should understand and feel properly the duties which attach to us as members of so great and prosperous a community as this really is.

He who is perpetually complaining of his want of success in life, attributing it to the vice of his country's political institutions, while he never seriously and in earnest applies them in furtherance of his own industrial exertions, does no less than require other people, and not himself, to be the author of his welfare or success in life: —*but such an one can never prosper.*

Good laws must always be conformable to nature: being such as while they secure to a person and protect him in the enjoyment of his own personal rights and property, will never undertake the impossibility of attempting for him, independently of his own exertions, that which it belongs to himself to do, namely, "To earn his bread by the sweat of his own face;" and the best laws must always be those which, while they afford the most efficient protection to industry and property, leave him the most at liberty, and obstruct him the least in such course as may appear to himself the best calculated for the accomplishment of his own objects.

RICH AND POOR.

As Civil Government constitutes the arrangement by which the purposes of society are to be carried into effect, it remains to consider what those purposes are, since it is in vain that society is formed and government established, unless the purposes contemplated are defined, and the powers vested in the governing authority are made adequate to their accomplishment.

Civil society is indeed a compromise: it results from the necessity of regulating and restraining the natural licentiousness of mankind, so as to prevent one person from encroaching on the rights of another, and, by so doing, to secure an equality of rights to all,—not an equality of property, but an equality of rights; for, notwithstanding that in all periods of the world the distinction of rich and poor has existed, there have not been wanting persons, even in the most improved states of civil society, who feel and express themselves discontented that such distinctions should exist, and who imagine it to be within the scope and power of good laws to prevent it.

It needs, however, but little reflection to observe that the inequalities which exist in society result in the nature of things, from corresponding inequalities in the natural frame and constitution of the human being, as well as from the diversity of circumstances which connect him

with the world; from which it is unavoidable that property will accumulate in some hands, while, at the same time, it will continue deficient in others.

But if, as such persons imagine ought to be the case, the law of every state of civil society should, at this point, step in to adjust and equalize property, is it not plain that this would be no other than to make those who are favored by nature with superior advantages of intelligence or physical power, or both, the slaves or servants of those to whom nature has denied such advantages; and that, to do so, would be to paralyze the wisdom and energies of the one class, without, in the least, benefitting the other.

Besides the simply weak-minded and otherwise incompetent persons, who may be very properly the objects of our compassion, as also those who are simply unfortunate, and who may be entitled to our indulgent consideration, there are in the world such persons as the "idle," the "profligate," the "spend-thrift," and others, who, if they were entitled by law to a participation in the results of other persons' industry, would become indeed the drones and pests of society; who would eat up its substance, without at all contributing to its production; and who, if their principle were allowed to operate, and they themselves were not kept under by the restraints of law and the moral sentiment of mankind, would soon resolve society into its original elements, and would, in all probability, destroy themselves in doing so. Where nature and the circumstances of the world render an equality of property impossible, what can we hope for but only to secure to every body the freedom to exercise his natural qualifications in a manner the least restrained, and the most favorable for attaining the utmost success in life of which he may be capable.

Laws can do no more than this: nor is it fitting that they should attempt more; since to do so would evidently be to run counter to nature itself, which prescribes no more success to anyone than corresponds with his most improved natural qualifications.

It is hence the object of all good laws, and of every well-regulated society, to foster industry and to protect property, as well as to secure it with its accumulations to those whose wisdom and industry have acquired it. It is also—and very properly—the object of law to transmit the surplus property of wealthy persons to their heirs, and to enable them to dispose of it by will.

Nothing can be plainer than that, if this were not so, a limit would be immediately put upon the industry of individuals, so that no person could earn more than would suffice for his own life.

Nor would poor persons be at all benefitted by any law that should limit industry; on the contrary, such laws would materially injure them; since, besides that such laws would not prevent their having to work for their living the same as before, they would, on the contrary, prevent those varied and numerous employments which accumulated capital enables its holders to offer, and by which alone those great works which offer so much employment can be undertaken.

Capital is "hoarded industry," inasmuch as it represents the results of industry in the form of money, earned beyond what is immediately required. It remains, therefore, ready for the payment or compensation—as wages—to such as have their labour to give in exchange for it: so that to prevent such accumulations is, in reality, to prevent such persons from being employed. To limit

production, therefore, by withdrawing the protection of law from the accumulations of capital, is not only not to benefit, but is positively to injure them.

It is plain, therefore, that there must be inequalities in the conditions of human beings in this world, and that no state of civil society could prevent them, even if it were attempted.

But civil society, under the enlightened government of well-instructed and benevolent persons, is ever ready to vary and adapt the laws to the varying requirements of the people; so that all may have their fair chance of that "self-help," which the combined exertions of the whole community, as represented by the laws, can afford.

"The poor," the Scriptures inform us, "shall never cease from the land."

If this was true under a dispensation over which it pleased God to exercise a special superintendence, we can hardly expect it should be otherwise under dispensations more entirely human. But, enlightened as we are by the christian revelation, we may, without difficulty, understand that instead of cultivating jealousies about the positions it may be our lot to occupy in the present world, we might do better to reflect on the hopes and expectations which this has unfolded to our view; and by which we learn that the true riches consist not so much of the abundance of this world's goods, as in such a faithful discharge of the duties which belong to the stations we may happen to occupy, as shall enable us to realize these hopes and expectations when this transitory scene of earth shall have passed away; and thus we may all be contented to do our duty "in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call us."

CAPITAL AND MONEY.

As it is evident that "Rich" and "Poor" must exist in society not less than in nature, because of natural circumstances and inequalities which it is not in the power of human laws to equalize, it follows, as the natural and unavoidable consequence, that capital or wealth must constitute the distinctive attribute of the rich, whilst labour only remains as the attribute of the poor. But if the benefit of civil society consist in securing to all persons and protecting them in that exercise of their natural rights by which they may best help themselves, (while, in so doing, they mutually and necessarily help one another,) then it remains to explain how it is that money becomes the instrument, by the means of which this great object of the social compact is attained.

When capital has been acquired, persons find themselves in a position to indulge the wish for other things; hence, therefore, they exchange their respective surplus commodities with one another by direct exchange, or, as it is called, "barter." The convenience of mankind is, however, but very indifferently provided for in this way, since, although a person may possess a capital stock to dispose of, such as other people may want, it is not at every moment that he can find the person who possesses the exact thing he may want in exchange for himself;

and hence arises the necessity of providing some intermediate substance which, from its own value, may afford the means of estimating, by comparison with itself, the relative value of other things; such substance or medium is found in the metals, gold, silver, and copper.

When industry has provided an adequate supply of these metals, and their value is settled, they are coined into pieces and denominated "Money," and thus they become the standard of comparison by which the relative value of other things is ascertained; so that if I give a sovereign for any article, I obtain for it what I want, because the person who gives me what I want, in exchange for my gold, obtains its value in a form which enables him to go elsewhere and obtain from other persons such other articles as he may want for himself. Thus these which are called the "precious metals" become, from the obvious convenience of such arrangements, what is called the medium of exchange, or the measure of their exchangeable value. Without such arrangement it would not be practicable for a nation to accumulate, to any such an extent as is now done, so vast an amount and such variety of property; because it is only by such means that people can devote themselves each to some particular occupation, with an adequate assurance that the money obtained for his own productions will enable a man to obtain from others what he may want for his own use. It is, also, only by this subdivision of employment, that a person, thus devoting himself to one particular object, can become so skilful as to produce, in greater abundance and superior quality, such other articles as may be in general demand.

It is a common saying, that "a jack of all trades is a master of none." If, instead of being thus divided into

classes of business, mankind were still, as in uncivilized life, to depend wholly each person on his own individual exertion for everything, this would not only abridge the sum-total of human production, but would, besides, occasion whatever might be produced to be very indifferently or even badly done.

But though capital is thus represented as "hoarded industry," and, when existing in the form of "money," it becomes a very ready and convenient medium of exchanging one commodity for another, and thus of enabling mankind to supply each others wants, (while, in so doing, they provide in the best possible manner for their own,) it should not be overlooked that industry is, in itself, the basis of capital, so that capital could never have existed at all without it, and, therefore, that it is only by industry that capital can be still further increased, and made yet more and more abundant. When, however, capital has been created, it becomes equally true (and equally important it is to bear in mind) that capital itself becomes the basis of industry; so that without capital there could be but little employment: forasmuch as it is by the accumulations of capital alone that any considerable works can be undertaken, as it is also from capital only that profits can be realized, and the wages of labour be paid.

The greater the amount of capital there is in a country the better must it be for all persons in the country, rich or poor. It is better for the rich, because they can with the more ease employ the more labour; and it is better for the poor, because they can with the more ease obtain employment. But with respect to the portion of capital which any one should receive as compensation for his employ-

ment, that must, in all cases, depend not on the amount of capital which any rich employer may possess, but on the amount of profits which may remain after all other expenses of production have been paid; nor can anything be more unwise than to attempt to adjust a scale of wages on any other principle, since no man who has accumulated capital from the surplus of his industry would dispose of that surplus at a loss, in exchange for the labour of other people.

But the most important benefit resulting from capital, from the subdivision of employment, and from the adoption of a medium of exchange is, that it affords scope and opportunity for those intellectual occupations upon which our highest interests, as moral and accountable beings, depend; for it is only through these means that any one can possess himself of the opportunity of devoting his time to those exercises of the mind by which we become acquainted with the duties and obligations which attach to us, as such, in these most serious respects, and by which also all that knowledge in art and science is acquired, which, when developed by learned men and applied to the various purposes of mankind, render the industry of man so effective, as it has become, for the purposes of his own well-doing. "The wisdom of a learned man," says the son of Sirach, [*see Ecclesiasticus* xxxviii,] "cometh by opportunity of leisure, and he that hath little business shall become wise." And it may well become every one of us to encourage each other to discharge with zeal and efficiency the special duties of our respective callings, since, in thus acting, we shall best promote the interests of ourselves and of each other; and, at the same time, "maintain the state of the world."

WAGES.

As the classes "Rich and Poor," both naturally and necessarily, derive themselves in the state of civil society from the inequalities which exist in the circumstances and condition of mankind in the natural world, it follows, unavoidably, that it ought to be the purpose and object of all wise and good legislation, not to attempt the impossibility of counteracting what might seem to be the defects of nature, by endeavours to equalize things which nature has made essentially different as well as unequal, but, on the contrary, their purpose and object ought to be to attempt to harmonize and bring the laws of society into conformity with the laws of nature.

As the design of nature has, without a doubt, been to make industry the foundation of human prosperity, so should the design of civil government be to protect and foster industry, with the view of enabling every person to exercise his natural powers without check or disturbance, in such manner as to assist his own endeavours to provide for his own welfare.

And indeed it happens in most communities, notwithstanding the oblique and partial influences which too much taint and corrupt the laws, that most persons will be found to prosper, in their various degrees, so long as they conform to the laws, and so long as the laws themselves leave the people at liberty to act as may appear best for their own well-doing.

It is plain that a prosperity thus arising from the unre-

strained and independent exertion of their own energies, must make a people more contented and happy than any that can flow from arrangements which give preference and undue assistance to one class of persons as compared with others, while again the want of success, or the misfortunes which arise and become apparent, are seen to result, not from the unfavourable character of the laws preventing a person from attaining to a prosperity which he might otherwise reach, but from natural inability on his own part to make the laws—such as they are—available for his self-support, notwithstanding that they do indeed offer as much protection and assistance to himself as they do also to all other persons besides.

When matters are thus arranged, and persons are no longer able to charge against the laws that want of success in life which, in reality, arises from the fault or inability of their own natural powers to attain it, it soon comes to be seen where culpability ceases, and where misfortune begins; and thus we come to see also where it should begin to make sacrifices in favour of those who, from the defect of nature, are not able to maintain themselves, while, at the same time, we see further where the restraints or punishments of law should be applied to those who are the culpable authors of their want of success in life, or who violate their duty to society in other ways.

Where laws thus protect and foster industry, wealth, as a matter of course, accumulates, as also it is evident that by the adoption of money, or the medium of exchange, wealth thus accumulated will again become the means of employment; and hence arises the subject proposed for our present consideration in this Essay, that is, "Wages."

Wages have been variously defined by political economists: but if the idea of them be correct, they must

all resolve themselves into the same meaning, because they necessarily result from and imply the same thing.

"*Wages* are the barter or exchange of capital for *labour*."

It was shown in a former Essay, that while capital or hoarded industry avails to some persons and, in that form, becomes the basis of industry, so industry or labour—that is, the power and skill to work,—is the sole attribute of other persons; and that through the medium of exchange—that is, money—labour and capital admit of being exchanged for one another.

The present enquiry accordingly is, what is the relation which labour and capital bear to each other in this exchange: as capital and labour are to be given in exchange for one another, the question is, what are the considerations which are to determine their relative value expressed in money?

It has been already observed, that the portion of capital which any employer should give, must depend, not on the amount of capital which such employer may possess, but on the amount of "profits" which may remain after all other expenses of production have been paid; and the principle of this is plain enough, since a man who has accumulated capital from the surplus of his own industry would not dispose of it at a loss, in exchange for the labour of other persons. Unless, therefore, a person who has capital to dispose of in exchange for labour, can procure that labour after a rate which will still leave him an adequate profit,—that is, accession of capital after all expenses, including wages, have been paid,—he will not employ the labour at all.

Wages have, therefore, this limit to begin with, namely, that they can never amount, under any circumstances, to

so much of the capital, which is to be given in exchange for them, as shall wholly absorb the profits, for the sake of which the capital is employed; for otherwise it would amount to no less than this, that a person having capital to employ should incur every risk, and make every sacrifice of his own interests, for another who incurs no risk at all. Such a proceeding would be not only contrary to every principle of self-maintenance, but would indeed ill accord with any just principle on which we could be expected to help one another.

There is an old saying, that "the worth of a thing is what it will bring," and I do not know any more intelligible mode of considering this subject than by estimating what the labour of a man is worth, when he offers it in free competition with others, to such as may require it; for nothing can be plainer in this case than that the wages of labour must follow the same laws and be regulated, as all other exchangeable commodities are, upon the same common principles of supply and of demand,—and they will vary accordingly.

When any thing is desirable but yet scarce, it will fetch a high price; when it is abundant it will become, by comparison, cheap, and may be had at low price.

Wages, accordingly, which, are "the price which any one has to pay for the use of another person's labour and skill for a specific time and work," will vary, and be more or less dear according as there are more or fewer persons ready and competent to undertake and do it.

But yet, as observed above, they cannot in any case absorb that adequate amount of profit to the employer without which he will not find it worth his while to employ the labour at all; while also, it may be, that

nothing remains beyond to compensate the artizan, in which case the work must cease as not producing a sufficient profit for the two parties who are interested in the production.

Hence, it appears, that all questions of wages resolve themselves into the consideration of what amount of the profit resulting from production, is fair and adequate, as between the capitalist, who provides the raw material or means of production, and the labourer or artizan who applies his skill and labour to these means, and accomplishes the production.

In considering such a matter as this, there should be no scope for those unhappy and ill-advised contentions which have so frequently occurred between working men and their employers, for there is always a principle lying at the foundation of things, by which if people will not of their own accord regulate them conformably with their mutual interests, the things will ultimately regulate themselves.

If employers and working people cannot agree as to the share of the profits of production which should severally attach to one and the other for their respective interests in the work, it is plain enough that anger and strife and violent aggression will not settle matters with any better effect.

But if, in cases of difference and dissatisfaction, they would mutually respect each others' rights while the interests involved on both sides remain under consideration, this would either lead to a better understanding and more accordant arrangements, or otherwise, the capitalist, on his part, not considering it worth his while to employ labour on the terms demanded, while the working man, on

his, not considering it worth his while to work on the terms offered, production would cease, and both capital and labour would look out for other and more congenial occupation.

This may be, as it undoubtedly is, an unhappy and undesirable state of things; but it happens naturally, and being the natural and unavoidable result of that unrestrained condition of things by which people are left at liberty to seek their own prosperity in their own way, while, in doing so, they become unavoidably dependent on one another, it cannot but happen at times that misfortune and distress should occur in this, as in other ways, without fault in anybody, and it only remains in such cases to look into the truth of the case, and to act as the facts may require.

But nothing can be more important, as respects these matters, than that we should observe, without disturbance, that important duty of self-maintenance, by which, while we assert our right to help ourselves in our own way, and claim the protection of the law in doing so, we are equally obliged and bound to respect the rights of other people in doing the same for themselves.

There can be no doubt that in such unhappy and disastrous misunderstandings respecting wages, as those of which we have recently experienced—a strike as injurious, in all probability, to all parties as any that ever occurred—there may be errors on either side.

There are occasions when both parties are each, more or less in turn, in the power of the other, and when neither of them should ungenerously take advantage of the other. When profits are low and labour scarce, it would be ungenerous in the artizan to embarrass the employer with

the demand for high wages, because the doing so might drive him to the painful necessity of closing his works, and thus of inflicting an injury, against his will even, upon the working people themselves, who, in such cases, must be considered as the real authors of the calamity resulting from his doing so.

When, again, profits are high and labour plentiful, it would be equally ungenerous for the employer unduly to reduce the wages of the artizan, because this might reduce him to work for less than a fair compensation for the productions of his labour, or otherwise to "strike" rather than submit to such unkindness.

These, however, are considerations such as cannot be made the basis of any terms of agreement between the working man and his employer. They involve indeed the principles which lie at the foundation of all good laws, and no laws can be good which do not involve them: but when laws are once made they should be complied with; nor ought they to be set aside as unavailing because they do not seem to meet every conceivable case that may arise under them, for that is more than any laws, in the nature of things, can do.

If they are good because they do not interfere with people in their endeavours to help themselves, nothing can be more inconsistent or wrong than to find fault with them for not interfering when those endeavours fail, for how should the law be responsible in such case for that which the people, when quite unrestrained, are unable to do for themselves.

The proper and, indeed, only corrective for misconduct such as this, should be looked for, and can only be found, in the moral sentiment of mankind; and nothing can tend

to secure this in favour of either party when thus treated by the other, so certainly as a firm and steady adherence to the true principles on which alone the fabric of all well-ordered communities can be sustained: namely, those principles which, while they recognise in all men the right to earn their bread in their own way, are ever watchful and ready to protect them in doing so. For we ought not to suppose that because, in particular instances, the operation of a law seems unfavourable to our particular interests, the law must necessarily be bad, or that it should even require alteration; since, although laws, like other things, may require occasional revision and fresh adaptation to the changing circumstances of the world, we should at all times not only conform to the law while it exists, but, before we condemn and change it, we should make it quite apparent that our want of success is in the law, and not rather in our ownselves in not knowing how to adapt the law, as it is, to the purposes of our well-doing.

There is want of success in nature not less than in society, and there must exist misfortune and want of success in society not less than in nature: it arises in both from what is called the "imperfection of human nature." Civil society cannot be expected to correct it altogether: we can only hope through the instrumentality of the best laws that we can make, and through the best and most cordial co-operation, as also the most willing obedience that we can apply to them, to assist each other in carrying into some better effect the laws of God; which require that we should do as we would be done by, or, in other words, that we should love our neighbour as we love ourselves.

PAROCHIAL CHARITIES.

As industry is the true basis of human prosperity, it follows, as a necessary consequence, that when the industry of persons who would otherwise live by their own labour, is precluded or rendered unnecessary by gifts from the labour of other people, the sum-total of human prosperity must, in the same degree, be diminished. So that unless charities be so administered as to relieve only the wants of those who, from the misfortune of their circumstances, are incapable of maintaining themselves, such charities must operate injuriously on the general welfare of a community.

For it must be evident, on a moment's thought, that to support by charity, on the plea of want, persons who, but for such charity, would certainly maintain themselves, must prevent that accession to the general stock which would otherwise accrue from the creations of their labour; and thus, instead of contributing their due share of production to augment the general prosperity, they become dependent on and are mere consumers of the labour of their fellow citizens.

But it is not only as idle consumers of other people's earnings that society is injured by such persons,—this would be the least evil resulting from the existence of such drones in the hive of human industry,—it is in its effects

on the morality of themselves and their influence on others, that an unwillingness to work on the principle of self-maintenance is the most injuriously felt.

Nothing lies so deeply at the root of all bad affections of the human mind as that wilful predetermination or purpose to live upon the fruits of other people's industry, which, to so great an extent, characterizes large masses of the able-bodied population of this and, perhaps, other countries.

No persons are so idle in their general dispositions, or so immoral in their personal habits,—none are so regardless of their social duties,—none so turbulent and disaffected as respects the laws,—none so thankless for the relief they receive on account of supposed wants and misfortunes,—none so disrespectful to, and so contemptuous of, the kind hearts and benevolent sympathies on which it is their practice to impose, and on whose bounty they live. For it is, unhappily, too true, that when a person abuses his reason and refuses to act conformably with the rules, and on the principles which nature and religion alike prescribe for the furtherance of our best interests, he will soon become a prey to the worst influences of those irregular passions and evil affections of our nature, which it is the purpose of all good laws, as well as of religion itself, to regulate and controul.

It is hence that I have been often led to doubt the beneficial effect of parochial or other public charities. They are, no doubt, given with the benevolent intention of relieving the *incapable* poor; but as they constitute a property which belongs *of right* to the poor, *as such*, and the trustees have no other interest but only to apportion them according to prescribed regulations, it seems

scarcely possible that they can be dispensed with that good effect which distinguishes private charity.

A property which belongs to the poor *of right* will be claimed *as of right:* it belongs to the poor in expectancy, and will be regarded as an exemption from the necessity of equivalent earnings on their own parts.

When, therefore, parochial charities are represented as of special benefit and importance to the poor, it becomes a serious matter of enquiry how to dispense them so as not to invalidate the important principle and duty of self-maintenance.

Charity is indeed a duty of great importance, not only as immediately involving the interests of our neighbour, but as also involving, with respect to ourselves, the affections of sympathy, by which the impressions of self-love are thus naturally expanded into that more general and enlarged benevolence which is implied in the duty of "loving one another as we love ourselves."

If a person be really in want, and, at the same time, be incompetent to his self-support, let him by all means be relieved; but if that charity which was intended for such persons be dispensed to others, who, but for it, would maintain themselves, this does not in effect improve the condition of such persons in the least; instead of being an accession to their own means, it is, in reality, no more than a substitution of other people's industry for what ought to be their own. Instead, therefore, of benefitting such persons, charity thus dispensed is attended with this particular ill effect,—that it relaxes in them the habit of industrious exertion, and they are taught to depend on others at a time when nature and duty alike prescribe the sentiment of dependence on themselves alone.

When the natural feelings of self-love become expanded (as before observed) into that enlarged and enlightened benevolence which is implied in the duty of "loving our neighbour as ourselves," we are ready and willing to impart of our superfluities, or even to make sacrifices from our comforts, to supply our poor neighbour's need; while the effect of doing so is to make both parties happy: the rich, from the realization of the feeling that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," the poor, from the grateful recognition of that sympathy or fellow-feeling by which they who, from their circumstances, are "above the power of want," are yet seen to acknowledge and feel for the need of their poor neighbour as though it were their own.

Such is the case when the charitable fund belongs to the persons themselves who dispense it. When, however, the fund belongs to the poor themselves who are to receive it, it rarely happens otherwise than that the discretion which is exercised by the trustees in apportioning it, is the source of dissatisfaction to many disappointed claimants, while, in any case, it is received with but little or no sense of obligation at all.

And, indeed, it must be acknowledged that charities which of right belong to the poor, do in effect amount to an equivalent exemption to the rich, inasmuch as what the poor possess of their own the rich have so much the less occasion to give them. And being dispensed after a manner which too often affects their feelings with dissatisfaction in various ways, it is plain that they must be greatly deficient of those beneficial influences by which "charity should bless both him who gives and him who receives it."

ON THE PROPER DIRECTION OF CHARITABLE EXERTIONS.

THERE can be no difference in principle between public and private charity, the just object of both being the relief of persons who from circumstances are unable, though willing, to maintain themselves. But as private charity is more directly subject to the discretion and controul of the individuals from whose benevolence it proceeds, and the range of its application may be therefore more extensive and somewhat different in character, it shall accordingly be my present endeavour to exemplify this; while, in so doing, I shall hope to make it apparent that the sentiments advocated in a former paper are deserving of the most serious consideration.

Nothing is more commonly supposed by persons of kind and generous dispositions than that poor persons are not paid a sufficiency of wages for the work they do, and that it should be the purpose of employers not to obtain the comforts of their own life through the labour of a working population, without at any rate taking care that the labourers also should be enabled to provide for their own comfort in return, and should be paid accordingly such amount of wages as may be sufficient to do so.

It is obvious, however, that if the doctrines advocated in my former papers be correct, the doctrine involved in the above supposition must be incorrect; inasmuch as

it assumes that the payment in compensation for work rests on *discretionary* grounds altogether independent of the principle of supply and demand, on which, in those papers, it was clearly demonstrated that the interchange of all human industry ought to be founded.

When labour is scarce, as compared with the demand, wages rise; when, on the contrary, labour is abundant, wages fall: the amount of wages, like all other variable things, depending not on what may be required for the maintenance of the working man, but on what—under the circumstances—may be required for the production of the work, and which can only be determined by competition in the free market of labour.

It is the same with wages as with profits. When profits fall below the risk incurred in the enterprise of business, the business will be discontinued "as not answering." So when the competition for work is great, and wages fall from the abundance of the supply of labour, working people will discontinue such employment in which the amount of profits accruing as their share of the production, does not afford an adequate maintenance; because, in such case, the business "does not answer" to them, and they will look out for some more profitable occupation.

It is in this way that, in the long run, business is carried on and regulates itself, and by which both profits and wages are determined. The reason why what is called "skilled labour" is more remunerative than what is called "unskilled labour," is simply that great skill, like great ability, is comparatively scarce, and consequently in those employments which imply the union of both mental and physical ability—as the number of such talented persons is comparatively small—so there are but few to claim the wages by which they are to be compensated for their work,

and consequently the share of each will be proportionably large.

It is for the same reason that such persons as lawyers, physicians, dentists, and the higher orders of engineering, mechanical and scientific occupations, are more highly paid than such other occupations as do not require great abilities; for in these the ordinary abilities of the bulk of mankind sufficing for the work, they will always present themselves for it in greater numbers, and will consequently be paid at a lower rate, because there are so many to share the fund which has to be divided among them. And those employments particularly which cannot be undertaken at all excepting only by persons who, besides such natural abilities of mind and body, require also considerable time and money beforehand in order to furnish them, by proper education, with the requisite learning and tools or other necessary qualifications, will be yet more highly compensated, because the number of persons engaging in such employments must be, by comparison, few, which will limit the competition so as to enable them to demand an ample remuneration for the trouble and time and risk and talent previously expended in applying their qualifications to the work.

But let us see how the process of attempting such an object as that of compensating labour rather by what individuals may require for their own maintenance than by what is adequate to the work, would resolve itself; that is, what would be its ultimate effect on the welfare and the happiness of a community? I say the process of "attempting," because, to my mind, it is plain enough, that however it may be attempted, it is, of all ways, that which would assuredly end in the most disastrous failure and disappointment; and which, instead of accomplishing the ob-

ject desired, would prove the cause of a yet deeper distress than any it might be intended to prevent or to relieve. Instead of encouraging exertion, it would promote inaction or idleness; and in the same degree in which it would give to persons what they do not earn for themselves, it would supersede the necessity for their labour, and by thus diminishing production would impair the general prosperity.

Suppose, then, the sole owner of an entire parish, at once benevolent and rich, was bent upon the attempt to banish poverty from his domain. He may be supposed to argue in the following manner: two shillings or half-a-crown per day can, at the farthest, do but little or no more than provide the bare necessities of life; I should wish my people, at any rate, to be comfortable: I will therefore give them, by way of addition or bounty, a shilling per day more. And I (his wife may be supposed to say) will provide every requisite for their wives on lying-in, as well as also such clothes as may be necessary for their children.

Nothing certainly could be more laudable than the *intention* of such arrangements; but now let us trace their probable consequences. An immediate increase of comfort would be observable, but presently the weather would, perhaps, be too hot for any considerable exertion, or it may be too frosty; and now and then the cottager would have a great deal of rheumatic pain, or a bad cold; thanks, however, to the squire's kindness, a lost day or two was no great matter, his necessities were at an end; he could, in such cases at the least, consult his ease. A remission of habitual exertion would be the result; sometimes a little illness, and sometimes a little pleasure, would check his ordinary labour. And, as when once listened to, the

reasons for avoiding trouble are, at all times, both numerous and frequently recurrent, so it would happen that before any great lapse of time the cottager would be equally or more poor with the squire's bounty than he had formerly been without it.

Nothing is so expensive as idleness: where business does not occupy, something else must; and the village alehouse would thrive on the ruin of the cottager.

Formerly he had himself made some provision for the doctor, and some for his own and for his family's clothing; but the lady's generosity has rendered all this unnecessary. Heretofore, also, the cottager's wife had darned and patched and pieced, to keep the children neat and tidy; but as this is rendered unnecessary by the lady's bounty, it matters little whether the trousers are out at the knees or the jacket at the elbows; the more new clothes are wanted the sooner they will be provided; and rags and tatters will be seen all the more, where it was the lady's purpose that they should be seen the less.

Common sayings should never be despised or disregarded, being almost universally founded on some important truth, and we have several on this subject, as, for example, "the more you give, the more they want;" "the more you do, the more you may do," &c., &c.; and we find it constantly asserted in statistical works that there never are establishments for the poor, without an obvious increase of both their wants and numbers; nor is it ever found in any parish that charitable bequests, however large in amount, have the least effect in ameliorating the general condition of the poor, or in diminishing the legal rate for their relief.

Such, however, is human nature; and it must be plain,

from what has been observed, that what we will not do for ourselves it is not easy to do for us, because the standard of our exertions will at all times be measured by the standard of our wants. If, therefore, our wants be supplied from the resources of other peoples' industry, this will, unhappily, be found in general to operate as a substitution for our own industry, and will relax our own exertions proportionably.

It is not until some superior consideration operates, and we begin to feel our interest in the productions of industry, that we can adapt ourselves to the necessities of our condition, and experience pleasure in the discharge of duty.

When the love of money, or any intense object of desire, can be made to operate, and people can look with comparative assurance to its acquisition, industry may become even pleasurable; and we accordingly see that no gratification in life appears so great as that which impels many successful seekers of wealth to pursue their gains: but when that is not the case, and a sense of moral obligation and of religion are not present to impel that industry which befits a person's position and circumstances, a man will in general look but little before him; so that, provided he can obtain, by one way or another, what his necessities absolutely demand, he will experience more happiness in a life of comparative inaction, and the habitual satisfaction of his animal propensities, than in that which implies the exertions of a steady and continued industry.

Thus it comes to pass that industry is checked, instead of being promoted, by gifts; and the welfare and happiness of the poor is, in the long run, proportionably impaired.

Let a labouring man, as before observed, do what he

can for himself: if he cannot do enough, do it for him. But if he can do enough for himself and you still do it for him, what you do will not prove an accession to his own gains, but only, in general, a substitution for them; and society will lose so much as he thus fails to produce as his own contribution to the common stock.

The proper direction of all charity, it is thus clear, depends on this principle, namely, assist those who are really needy, and you act with true benevolence: assist those who could do without your assistance, and you only relax or destroy their own exertions. Self-dependence ought to constitute the very pith and marrow of our worldly happiness, and should do so equally as much in the case of the poor as in that of the rich; for when once the standard of a person's wants is raised above his power to satisfy them, he can no longer know how he is to live from day to day: but he who relies on himself is more comfortable, more virtuous, more dignified, than either patronage, protection, or bounty, can ever make him; and he who would be a true friend to the poor, should teach them to be their own benefactors.

It should also be considered that "self-dependence" is "independence." He who, having the power to maintain himself by his own labour, nevertheless renders himself dependent on the bounty of others, can scarcely do so without impairing the value and advantages of his own position as a man and as a member of society; and thus, more or less, subjugating himself to those external influences which, being within his power, it is also his duty to controul.

It shall now be my endeavour to apply the above principles to cases in which benevolence may be expected to do good to poor people.

What is done in aid of their health and education is to be commended, inasmuch as without these they can neither maintain nor improve their own condition, and in neither can they be expected to do much for themselves by any unassisted exertions of their own. Although, therefore, as observed above, what may be done for poor people in these respects, should have the effect of occasioning expectations on their part, and of relaxing their own efforts, it should be considered that assistance rendered to them in sickness and in education is not a *substitution* of their own industry, but is, in reality, an aid by which they must themselves be rendered more efficient for their own self-support, and better disposed towards it.

And, in general, I may here say, that whatever may be so applied as to foster and promote industry, as well as to enable a person to accomplish a legitimate or praiseworthy object, such benevolence cannot but be well applied, because the object of benevolence is to help those who, though willing, are unable to help themselves; for charity is objectionable only when it is injuriously applied to those who are capable, but unwilling, to do for themselves what they can get done for them.

And it is in this that private benevolence has such advantages over public charity: that being less defined in its objects, and more under the controul of benevolent persons, when they see a man diligent in his business, or otherwise one who, with some encouragement, would feel his own industry stimulated, private charity can, in such case, not only render the poor man's unassisted exertions available to his future self-support, but can encourage the talent and energies of others, so as to advance, in their sphere of life, by timely patronage and assistance, such as *are naturally* qualified to rise in the scale of society.

For charity is not to be limited to the poor in such a sense that those only who are in the lowest grades of social life should receive the mere daily bread which they may be unable to earn for themselves.

Such charity more properly belongs to some public provision of the law, and indeed it is an important public duty thus to exercise it; but in a more enlarged and more important sense, *benevolence*—as the term itself should be understood—is that goodwill to others by which, whatever their position, any person in difficulty, who does the best he can for himself, may hope to be aided by his fellow creatures.

And, to sum up, I will say that wherever such assistance can be rendered to the poor *or other person* struggling with difficulties, and he may be incited, by timely and opportune assistance, to renewed and successful exertion, it is unnecessary to attempt a catalogue of the particular cases to which charity, or (in its more enlarged and more important sense) *benevolence* or *goodwill*, should be applied: it belongs to our discretion and judgment to determine these as they arise; and amongst the obligations which attach to us, as moral and accountable beings, I scarcely know that I could mention one more important than that of promoting industry with all the virtues connected with it, while we discountenance and discourage idleness with all its attendant vices, by a due and proper direction of our charitable exertions.

OPERATIVE STRIKES. PART I.

THE subject of Operative Strikes involves considerations of deep interest, not only as affecting the relations between working people and their immediate employers, but more generally as affecting the relations between industry and property, under those anxious circumstances when the operative classes challenge and denounce the very principles themselves on which property has, in the first instance, been enabled to derive itself from the accumulations of industry, and has, in return, become the source of employment, and the consequent support of those who exchange labour for wages.

If it were a mere question whether the labour and the wages exchanged for one another in any business, were in due and fair proportion, that could be easily enquired into and settled on acknowledged principles; nothing being plainer than that wages must vary, and be at all times proportioned to the demand for the work: but it is the misfortune of strikes that they do, in reality, abnegate such principles. They assert, in the first place, that no such relation ought to subsist at all as that of a large capitalist and a numerous class of persons all dependent on a precarious share of the profit which he may be enabled to realize through the agency of their labour. They consider that a state of things such as places an individual with his capital in one scale against a numerous class

in the other, with nothing in their hands but the power and skill to use them, is a disproportion which does not admit of any just balance, and which no just principles could ever fairly bring about. They think that such disproportion should be equalized, conformably with man's natural rights, by such a distribution of the profits accruing from the action of their labour on capital, as may effect a fairer proportion between them.

That such is the latent feeling existing in the classes of the working people who have of late years distinguished themselves by strikes, cannot be doubted by any person who has paid attention to the language of their leading delegates and representatives.

Assuming, therefore, that the purpose of such persons is to assert a claim on the capital of their employer, beyond the wages which may be proportioned to the demand for the work and the profit due to the capitalist, and that they assert this claim upon the principle that the rights of man forbid the accumulation of capital in one person to the exclusion of it in the many: it shall now be my endeavour to expound the fallacy and the misfortune of such persuasions and purposes, and to show that the rights of man in this world, when properly understood, whether in the state of nature or in that of society, do by no means imply an equality either of position or of condition, but only the unrestrained freedom and power to exercise his natural aptitudes and qualifications, to promote his own well-being to the utmost extent for which he may possess a capacity to do so; and that when the arrangements of society afford facilities, indeed, beyond any which could be expected, a man can, assuredly, have no reason to complain when these facilities enable persons of superior qualifications to

realize from them advantages superior to his own, for in this respect, at least, society has done its best to make them equal.

It is undeniable that if our position in society be at all determined upon natural principles, it cannot be otherwise than that such disproportion amongst mankind must exist as that which is found actually to obtain in all communities; for as they result from inequalities in human nature itself, it is manifestly impossible but that these inequalities should indicate themselves throughout man's existence in the world, nor could any efforts, however attempted, to level and make equal what nature has made unequal, prove of any avail.

If, for the sake of enabling the feeble of mind and of body to stand on a level with the strong, those securities were withdrawn which are provided by society for the accumulations of industry, and for the promotion and protection of all that emanates from the cultivated mind, what would or could be the effect, but only to relax the exertions of the one and to render unavailing the efforts of the other. For who would create by his industry more than might be required for his own personal wants, if he must immediately share it with the idle and incompetent? and who could cultivate the mind, if he were thus placed under the perpetual necessity to be exerting the powers of the body?

The principles involved in any such system, however disguised they may be under the specious names of Communism, or of that philanthropy, by which we regard our neighbour as the equal of ourselves, are, in truth, no other than what, if brought into actual operation, would and must throw society back upon the rudest forms of

social life, if not of uncivilized or of savage nature altogether; because, as above intimated, they destroy the security provided in society, by which alone the fruits of industry are secured to those who realize them.

If that security were once destroyed, it is plain that it could no longer be worth people's while to provide by their labour more than what would suffice for their own present and immediate wants, and thus the whole fabric of society must be deranged and thrown back upon its original and unformed condition.

Such, indeed, has been the effect of strikes in particular localities, while again it has been another effect of them that some places have taken up the business which strikes had occasioned to be abandoned in other localities.

Dublin, for example, was, at one time, a great place for ship building; but now, not only are no ships built at Dublin, but few are even repaired there: a shipwright's union having rendered it impracticable to the masters to continue the business without present loss, and the prospect of eventual ruin.

Dublin was once also a great place for the manufacture of furniture; now, most furniture used in Ireland is imported from England. Two great canals were cut, at a vast expense, for the purpose of conveying the spare produce of the inland parts of Ireland, cheaply to Dublin; but the bargemen on the canals combined to fix their wages, and will not allow any man to be discharged from his employment, even for irregular or immoral conduct. The consequence is that but few persons use the canals, and no one will send by them any articles requiring care, because the bargemen are not to be trusted to take care of them or even to convey them safely.

In England, all who are not wanted to cultivate the land, find employment in manufactures or in commerce. In Ireland, combinations have driven away most of the manufactures and commerce: so that in Ireland there is scarcely any employment to be obtained excepting upon the land; and as there is not land enough for all, there is a continual struggle to obtain land and to keep it, which often leads to sad outrages and murders, such, as we all know, have tainted and disgraced that unhappy part of the British empire with those most revolting crimes.

Thus it is that a whole country may be made poor and miserable, in comparison of what it might be, through the effects of combinations, for they injure, not merely those who engage in them, but also all other persons besides, because they prevent that employment of capital by which labouring people might be set to work, and be enabled to support themselves and their families.

Strikes, therefore, when, unhappily, they prove effective, have this sad effect, that they throw back the wealth and prosperity of a community, and destroy the means by which poor people would otherwise be enabled to maintain themselves by work.

And thus it would inevitably happen, if strikes were more general and effective, that any country whatever, however prosperous it might have become through the previous wealth, talent, energy, and manufacturing power of its population, would again become poor, like Ireland, from the want of employment which they would occasion.

It is supposed by persons who encourage strikes, and by the operatives themselves, who are so unhappily induced to join in them, that it is hard measure and unfair that one person, simply because he has wealth and is thus enabled

to pay wages to a great number of persons, should derive a large income, and gradually amass a large fortune, from the work of so many people, while they all the while are but living from hand to mouth, and may, at any moment, be reduced to poverty from the stoppage of the employment.

Nothing is more certain than that strikes have never yet improved the condition of labouring people, while, as in the case of Ireland, as just mentioned, and other instances which might be adduced, strikes have produced permanent injury, not only to themselves but to their neighbours also; for such injury cannot but be felt in a yet more extended range, and more or less affect the general welfare.

But the error of the endeavour thus to compel a concession of advantages to themselves consists in this, that it is supposed possible that business can be carried on at all with such a distribution of profits as that which this principle implies. What makes the income of the capitalist large and his fortune eventually great, is that, although the profits are reduced to the lowest amount, these profits are considerable in number, and a large number of small gains will amount to a considerable sum when accumulated and added together. But it does not follow from this that he could improve the wages of the working man; since, when profits are reduced to a minimum, there is absolutely no interval between a minimum profit and an actual loss. If, therefore, he were under such circumstances to add to the wages of the men, they indeed would receive some immediate and inconsiderable addition each man to his wages; but the effect on the capitalist would be that by as many men as he had in his employ he would suffer so many losses; and so it would happen that, whereas before

the accumulation of small or minimum gains had enabled him to conduct his business and to realize a considerable income, now, on the contrary, instead of such gains and such income derived from them, an equal accumulation of small losses would amount to a large loss, and such loss repeated would soon diminish and ultimately destroy his capital and the means of employing working people at all, and thus of carrying on his business altogether. It is plain, therefore, that in such a state of things, strikes can be no remedy for any supposed insufficiency of wages, when profits are at a minimum.

Wages must depend, not upon any supposed sufficiency to supply a maintenance to a working man, but upon that amount of the profits which remains after the capitalist has retained a sufficient compensation to cover all the trouble, and expense, and risk, of conducting the business, and without which he would not feel it to be worth his while to conduct it at all.

In like manner, if the wages or profit remaining for the working man be not adequate to the labour which he brings to the work, his proper remedy is not to require an advance of wages which the state of trade and the conditions of the manufacture may not admit,—not this,—but his proper remedy is to withdraw himself from the business, and to seek his maintenance in some more available occupation in which the competition (by which, in the long run, wages will always be determined) is less, and the character of the occupation is more remunerative.

There can be no doubt but that the public at large are largely benefitted by businesses conducted on large capitals, because no other but such large businesses can furnish the articles which are so extensively wanted at the ex-

tremely small prices at which they are produced; but if in doing so the capitalist avail himself of that cheapness of labour which a strong competition for employment will always occasion, and by which alone he can be enabled to cheapen his own productions to the purchaser, it is then —"at this point"—that the working man should withdraw himself, and no longer continue in a business in which he must feel that the wages or compensation is falling below the proper value of his labour. It is at this point that he should cease from a business which does not afford a living profit, and seek a better maintenance in some more remunerative occupation.

Should this seem difficult—should it appear scarcely practicable thus to withdraw from one business to fix on and settle on some other,—the answer to any one enquiring under such circumstances, "what shall I do?" ought to be, "push and tact;" for, painful as the thought may be, it is nevertheless the truth, that he who has neither the energy to push, nor the tact to discern *where* and *how* to push his interests in life, is but where nature has placed him when he finds himself in the category of unfortunate and dependent people.

Necessity, we all know, is the parent of invention. It is the energy and talent of mankind applied to the various difficulties which beset the path of life in our passage through the world, to which we are indebted for the multiplied inventions and conveniences which distinguish all well-regulated societies; and which, as respects ourselves in this country, ought to make us so especially thankful that we are thus enabled to lessen the struggle of life, and to provide—as we do, in so many ways—for the comfort of ourselves and of one another; and I feel sure that

if industry be, as it undoubtedly is, the true basis of our prosperity in this world, we should push our way with our best energy and tact, yet avoiding that jealousy of other people which, without at all improving our own condition, would deprive them of their well-earned prosperity. For the contemplation of successful industry in others should have the effect of stimulating industrious exertions in ourselves. Instead of that envy which would depress another more prosperous than ourselves, we should rather cultivate that generous emulation which would elevate us to the happier standard of his better fortunes.

OPERATIVE STRIKES, PART II.

As capital is the result of surplus earnings, and then in return itself becomes the source of employment, it follows that the more capital there is the more employment there should be. Any combination therefore, whether on the part of employer or of working people, that shall have the effect of diminishing production, must be injurious to society, and, in the long run, prove especially so to the persons themselves who thus derange the natural laws of supply and of demand.

The profits of employers depend on the same principles as do those of working people. When employers in the same business are numerous and active, production will be great, and prices proportionably cheap; and it will depend on the demand, under these circumstances, whether the profit of the employer, and the wages of the working man, be such as to render it worth the while of either of them to continue in such business, or whether they should not resort to some more available occupation.

It is from the necessity hence arising in all businesses, that when the limit of profit is thus found by a natural and legitimate competition, people are constrained—as observed in the conluding paragraph of the last Essay—to the adoption of those inventions by which the various faculties and talents of mankind are tested and exercised, and by which we are enabled, in so many ways, to contri-

bute to the comfort of one another and to the general welfare, whilst all the while we are perhaps thinking only how we may best maintain or enrich ourselves.

But if one person can amass a capital from surplus earnings, another may do so; and it must be evident that national prosperity consists, and can only consist, in the aggregate of the surplus of private or individual earnings. But if, when prosperity is thus secured to individuals and to the community by the compact of society, any person is to be supposed aggrieved because other persons are more prosperous than himself, or because he is perhaps absolutely unprosperous in his circumstances, what becomes of those rights by which, for the sake of mutual security and protection, mankind form themselves into the condition of society at all? For such a sentiment as this, if it mean anything, implies that no man should at any time, or under any circumstances, be superior in his worldly condition to another, inasmuch as the supposed rights of man imply equality: than which, there can be no greater nor more injurious error.

The rights of man, properly understood, can imply no more than that any and every person should enjoy, without molestation and disturbance, the free and unrestrained exercise of his natural qualifications, whatever they may be, both of mind and of body. But as to equality, nature has not indicated equality in anything, and certainly not in the human being, who is as unequal in his various powers and aptitudes as it is possible to conceive anything to be. Hence it is that society has been resorted to as the best or only means of providing, by a community of operation, that which a community of interest requires.

But if the rights of man do not imply equality in nature, so neither can they imply any such equality in the state of society, as must be obvious; because, in any condition of mankind, superior powers and qualifications must maintain a disparity in favour of those who possess them. Nor would it conduce to the welfare and happiness of mankind that it should be otherwise; for it must be obvious, on a moment's thought, that the purpose of society is not to attempt the impossibility of equalizing things which nature has made unequal, but to harmonize and bring into concurrent operation things that may be different and unequal, so as to render them accordant and conducive to the general welfare, and doing this, by the contribution of their respective powers, towards the common good of all. And all ought to be satisfied when the arrangements of society afford scope and opportunity for the exercise of those powers, both of mind and of body, which, as individuals, they may possess.

But if, in addition to this, it afford facilities beyond, and such as they could never enjoy in a state of nature, they ought to pause before they attribute to the laws such misfortunes as they ought in fairness to admit they may have brought upon themselves: nor ought they to expect from the unaided operation of the law, that good fortune which can and ought to be the effect alone of their own industry and good conduct.

Any one who will dispassionately consider these matters, must see that the state of society, and the distinctions which exist in it, result not from the operations of the laws, but, on the contrary, that the laws result from these distinctions in society.

Where such a diversity exists in the frame and texture

of the human being, and where the circumstances of the world will affect him so variously, how can it be otherwise but that mankind should fall into corresponding classification, and that disparities of all kinds should take their place accordingly.

It is the business of the law to provide for such states of society as may thus come to exist; but any principles of law which should recognize the rights of man to equality with one another, it is plain could never harmonize with such a state of society.

The capital by which the rich are enabled to put in the balance an amount of money which represents the wages and maintenance of many poor persons, does not imply any subjection on the part of the poor, or any exaltation on the part of the rich; it implies only the fact itself of successful industry, which is indicated by its accumulations in the hands of the capitalists, and ought to be recognized as the happy means by which many who would otherwise be without bread are now enabled to earn it.

The disproportion between the capitalist and poor people may seem great, and, in particular cases, may really be so; but, on the other hand, the balance *may*, in some events, turn the other way; as, for instance, at the present time, where the able-bodied and adventurous working man finds himself in the new lands and gold fields of Australia or California, enabled there, by his labour, to accumulate, in a very brief space of time, more than the capitalist of the old world has accumulated by the industry of himself and his ancestors in generations of past and frugal savings.

I can only here repeat, that if any person feeling within himself the power of great exertion, while in an old and

fully-peopled country such opportunities do not exist by which, in so short a time, his exertions might hope for such compensation, and he is neither willing to bequeath to his posterity those expectations of ultimate prosperity, of which he could only commence the acquisition in his own life, nor patient in himself to continue always poor, such a person ought to consider himself as adapted only for the new lands and gold fields of which we have been speaking, and should at once betake himself to them; for it is only where there is much to have and but few to share it, that any person can make haste to be rich.

The old country is such as all old countries must become, that is, a country in which the pressure of population against the means of subsistence must necessarily be great and unavoidable, or avoidable only by the migration of its surplus population to new and less peopled countries, and where the means of subsistence are of easier attainment.

This seems to me the proper and natural course by which old countries may be made to continue in their already accomplished prosperity, and by which they may themselves be made the parents of new countries, and the fostering mothers by whose wisdom, experience, and their surplus population, such new countries may, from the first, commence their own career with the best expectations of becoming prosperous in their turn.

I have thus endeavoured to show that strikes result from serious misconception with respect to that great and fundamental principle, namely, *industry* or *self-support*, on which nature has made our duty and our interest alike to depend They are wrong in principle, because they are distinctly opposed to the plainest and most obvious

facts and duties of nature and of religion. If nature make us unequal—if it be our duty to work—it cannot be wrong to provide the means of accumulating the productions of industry; and if it be true that the accumulations of industry become in turn the means of recompensing labour, while that labour is, in itself, the means of providing for the comfort and welfare of a community, how can it be otherwise than that such accumulations of capital are the very evidence and proof that in thus providing for the wants and employments of mankind, we are accomplishing the general command of God, that we should "live by the sweat of our face," and promote each others welfare in doing so.

As respects the various advantages derived to mankind from the leisure which capital affords to persons who are thus enabled to exercise their minds instead of labouring with their hands, they have been explained in former papers; and I trust that the whole subject of social economy may now be so sufficiently understood, that any person seriously studying these papers, and thinking the subject over in their minds, may see that if the principles in them are correct, it is impossible but that *strikes*, and the principles which suggest them, must be injurious and wrong.

ENDOWMENTS.

As the circumstances of the world are necessarily in a progress of change, and the opinions of mankind change with them, it is obvious that what may be considered or may be suitable or convenient at one period, may become inconvenient or unsuitable at another. It follows, therefore, unavoidably, that all attempts to fix and settle things on any principles of finality, can have no other effect than to impede the progression of events, so as to render difficult and embarrassing the changes which are demanded by time, and which must unavoidably in time take place.

This observation does not apply so much to the principles on which the welfare and happiness of mankind in a state of society depend, as to the arrangements by which those principles are to be applied to the functions of civil government, in order that this may produce the utmost amount of good that can be accomplished through its instrumentality. And it applies remarkably to those large institutions of which, in this country, we are favoured with so many, established by private benevolence for the public good; as, for example, educational endowments, or endowments for the physical requirements of the people, such as hospitals, &c.: with respect to all of which I observe, that if these should remain to be administered,

without alteration, upon the merely prescribed terms of the original endowment, it is plain that while the world is advancing in knowledge and in the art both of instructing the mind and of healing the body, these institutions stand still, and what *was benevolence ceases "pro tanto" to be a benefaction.*

The principles which lie at the base of civil society, though simple, are yet founded in compromise: while, to a certain extent, they imply the surrender of man's natural rights, they nevertheless assert as large a claim to freedom, both of thought and of action, as may be exercised consistently with the exercise, in equal degree, of the same freedom in other people: the purpose, therefore, and object of civil government, can be no other than to secure to every member of civil society as large and unrestrained a possession of man's natural rights as he may be enabled to exercise without encroaching on the same rights on the part of his fellow citizens.

This being so, it hence becomes the duty of the governing power, whatever its form may be, to make this principle the basis or foundation of its whole superstructure and operations: its duty being, in fact, to represent that principle, and to apply it sedulously towards the accomplishment of that whole range of benefits which mankind are entitled to expect from the arrangements of an enlightened and well-organized community.

Now it is plain that although educational or hospital or other endowments, may have been the gifts of benevolence, they are, nevertheless, establishments such as are in themselves due to the requirements of the people, and such accordingly as it would be the duty of *any government* to provide for their benefit the moment they are seen to

be required, and they ought, as a matter of course, to be established on principles which may adapt them *prospectively*, not less than immediately, to their required purposes.

When, therefore, *private* benevolence presents itself to a community with such gifts, offering them on the particular scheme of regulation which, in effect, does but only express the benefactor's own particular or private sentiments as to the subject matter itself and the purpose he has in view, it becomes a grave consideration in accepting such gifts for public purposes, that those purposes be not so limited, nor the regulations for carrying them into effect so binding and restrictive, as to prevent that elastic or expansive application to the growing wants of the public which it is the duty of government to secure.

It may be true indeed that private endowments for such public benefits might be withheld, if they were not accepted on the terms on which they are offered; and it may also be true that we are indebted at the present time, perhaps, even for our existing capacity for still larger and more comprehensive means of instruction, or other benefit, to those very establishments themselves, as having been the means of such existing improvements; nevertheless, it is the duty of government to provide for the people the utmost advantages of every kind, and with respect to every matter, which the best judging minds amongst us consider to be of importance to the national welfare and happiness, or which, on any account, the people have the right to possess. On which account, one or other of two things ought to be done, either auxiliary establishments ought to be provided to supply deficiencies in those which exist, or, what is yet more proper, the

most searching enquiry and investigation should take place with respect to the means which already exist, in order that they may be adapted to present circumstances: for it would clearly be wrong to impose fresh imposts on the people, even for the best purposes, so long as we possess already an adequate power to accomplish the purposes required.

The subject of ancient endowments may possibly involve considerations which it would be arrogant to express very confident opinions upon; but it seems clear, at any rate, that where the duty of a government is so plain as that nobody can doubt its obligation to provide the utmost benefit for a people in education and in all other ways, no private benefaction ought to be allowed to stand in the way so as to lessen that public benefit in the smallest degree.

In all these cases there are authorized and prescribed modes of reconsidering and of altering such endowments; and I cannot but believe that if they were resorted to in a proper spirit, persons who have them in charge would not show themselves so adverse to change as they are sometimes supposed to be: since no persons can be more interested than themselves, even for their own credit sake, in conducting them so as shall produce the most good to others and the most credit to themselves.

TAXATION.

When a people exist in the form and condition of civil society, then arises, of necessity, the consideration how the expenses of maintaining the government—that is, the mode of carrying the purposes of society into effect—are to be defrayed.

The purposes of society, it is plain, can be no other than to secure to all persons such advantages from their industry and exertions as may consist with the common good; and this, it is evident, can only be done through the power of the whole community, so concentrated and applied as at once to make it the interest of individuals to find their own advantage in promoting the public welfare.

Such purposes can only be accomplished by the machinery or agency of what is called government, that is, such an arrangement of institutions and functionaries for conducting them as may be conducive to that end; and whatever may be the form of such government, whether it be constituted of the sole agency of one person or of many, the governing power does, in effect, represent the whole body of the people; and in that governing power is vested the judgment and discretion to levy contributions on the people generally, for the purposes required, under the existing laws.

This is taxation: and surely when it is considered that

it is by such arrangements, and by the protection of the laws alone, that we are enabled, through the exertions of our industry and talent, to make and to accumulate the productions of labour and art, and to transmit them to our heirs,—and that, but for this, no such exertions would or could be made, because there would be no security for their subsequent enjoyment,—none can with any reason feel dissatisfied that he should be made to contribute his fair share towards the maintenance of such institutions as may be found necessary for the accomplishment of such important benefits; benefits indeed by which both individuals and communities are enabled to attain the most important ends of our being in this present world.

And although it may be true that in this, as in all other human affairs, taxes may, at times, be both unduly levied and unnecessarily spent,—these are abuses, which it is the proper business of our legislature to correct, as it becomes also all persons who understand such subjects to assist and constrain the legislature to do,—but every one must see the necessity of paying the expenses of an army and navy, to secure the country against foreign aggression; of supporting the various institutions which are required for maintaining the internal peace and tranquillity of the country, and generally of promoting its prosperity, and protecting every member of the community in the quiet and unmolested enjoyment of his rights and property, by a due support of the laws and their administration.

Taxes will vary in character according to circumstances, and must at all times, more or less, correspond with the political condition of a country, the particular circumstances under which they are required, and the ability of those who may be called on to pay them.

Thus, under the feudal system, when all lands were held as fiefs under the crown, the possessors of land held them under the obligation to produce and maintain a body of retainers in support of the sovereign when at war. At that time also the tenants in chief of such fiefs exercised the prerogative of administering justice in their respective lordships. The expense of the clergy also was defrayed either from the produce of their own estates or by a tithe levied on the estates of others. While, before and after harvest, the roads and bridges were put into such repair as the depressed state of commerce at that time, and the little intercourse subsisting between different parts of the country, seemed to require, by exactions of the labour of the peasantry.

But the expenses of the crown and court were, for the most part, sufficiently met by the produce of the crown estates, which were, in most countries, very extensive.

From that period taxation, or the means of providing for the public expenditure, has gradually assumed the form of levies in money upon the various property of individuals. And it is clear that in thus levying it must, at all times, be a very serious consideration so to impose the tax as least of all to distress the individual who has to pay it, while, at the same time, it should be so imposed, as respects the interests of the country, as least of all to impair the productive power by which individual and national wealth are derived from labour, and from the application of capital to the various sources from whence wealth is derived from industry.

It is obvious that the wealthier a people are in proportion to the amount of the taxation required from them, the more easily such tax can be paid, and the lighter its

incidence will be felt. If again production should increase proportionably with increased taxation, such taxation may, in like manner, be as easily borne. And, in all cases, the point to be considered in the imposition of a tax, is so to impose it as not to fetter the springs of production; for when once the principle of taxation comes to be such that with a given or increased amount of taxation, the productive powers of a country are impaired, there will soon arise a difficulty or inability to pay it, while this difficulty will be extensively felt and indicated in the abridgment of the power of capitalists to employ labour, and the consequent dissatisfaction which the want of employment will occasion. All taxation must indeed occasion some degree of inconvenience and privation, because if it be imposed so as to diminish a person's capital it diminishes his productive power, and if it be imposed on his income it diminishes his present means of enjoyment; but if taxes are proper and necessary for the accomplishment of important public purposes, it is obviously desirable that they should be met by the retrenchments which will still enable prudent people to subsist on their diminished incomes; since, in that case, the capital will remain in undiminished amount, so as with increased energy to restore or improve them.

A tax does not necessarily fall on a person's capital because it is imposed *as* a tax on capital; as, for example, if a person can so reduce his expenditure as to content himself with somewhat diminished comforts for awhile, he may thus pay the tax by deduction from his profits or income, and thus save his capital by submitting (as every one ought to do) to the privations which prudence and good principle alike suggest.

Thus acting he would, in all probability, feel animated to increased exertion for the improvement of his income, and he might hope to do this with an undiminished capital; but if, instead of so acting, he were to continue the same mode of life with a capital so reduced as not to be able to maintain it, what could he expect but to suffer ultimately, in spite of himself, both in his capital and income and mode of life altogether.

This, however, shows how careful a government ought to be in the imposition of taxes, not to levy them to so heavy an amount as to put it out of the power of a person to pay them from the produce of his capital. A person may improve his means, however burdened, so long as he may feel that he can meet his obligations by increased exertion making his capital the instrument of augmented production; but when his powers of exertion are impaired at the same time that his obligations are increased, this will dishearten and paralyze his industry, and if extensively done and persisted in will surely lead on to the worst consequences; for as nothing can be so important for a nation heavily taxed, as that its power to bear taxation should be fostered and made equal or superior to its public obligations, so nothing can be more disastrous than to impair its power of exertion when it is most needed.

It is sometimes supposed that however taxation may be immediately felt, its expenditure by government will restore it in some way of advantage or other to those who pay it: but this is a great mistake. The only way in which taxation can benefit the tax-payer is the same in which it may benefit the community in general, namely, when it is so wisely and beneficially laid out as to promote the general

prosperity of the country,—then indeed it may have the effect of stimulating industry and of providing employment in various ways; but the immediate and direct effect of taxation is, and can only be, to impoverish him who pays it. To suppose otherwise is to imagine that a man can be benefited by spending at his store the same money which he had himself put into your hands; which is much about the same as if a thief were first of all to rob the shopkeeper and afterwards imagine he was restoring the money he had abstracted from his till by laying it out on the goods which the shopkeeper sells. In truth, such a proceeding would be nothing more than a man paying money with one hand and then receiving it back in exchange for goods with the other: in either of which case he would lose the money or its value.

Taxes may be "direct" or "indirect." They may be imposed directly or immediately on capital, or on rent or profits, or on the wages of labour, or they may be indirectly levied in augmentation of the price of commodities; and it must be admitted that something may be said for and against either of these principles of taxation.

As to direct taxation there is, unhappily, no such well-diffused recognition and acknowledgment of the blessings of civil society, nor such an appreciation of the necessity which exists for the large expenditure required for the support of our public establishments, as might reconcile persons, in all grades of society, to the immediate inconvenience of the tax-collector's demand. For this indeed but few people will regularly and properly prepare, however well they may know beforehand what will be required of them, and what they are responsible to pay. Direct taxation is invariably found to be irritating as well as

inconvenient, and setting, as it does, the interests of the tax-payer in direct antagonism with his duty, it too unhappily has the effect of tempting him to conceal and underrate his circumstances, so as to result in the most shocking dereliction of principle, such as must ultimately invalidate or even destroy that sentiment of honour and of honesty which are the surest foundation of national virtue.

Indirect taxation may have some inconveniences, as tending to derange the manner in which capital and industry would find their most appropriate directions in trade: since producers would naturally arrange their affairs with reference to their own interests, so as to evade the operation of the tax as respects their own profits, which might occasion them to transfer the action of their capital to different commodities, or even to embark it in other business; but indirect taxation has this good effect, that its operation, besides not being in general injurious to the producer, is almost insensible in its operation on the consumer: who, if he find his tea or sugar, or other article, somewhat dearer than it had been, refers the increase in price to some unexplainable cause, *e.g.* limited quantity in the market, which he knows enhances the price of everything, and but seldom attributes it to the tax; and for this best of all reasons, namely, that although in the aggregate of all exciseable articles he may feel sensibly that his means will not purchase as much as they used to do, nevertheless the difference in price as affected by the tax, rather than other circumstances, is so inconsiderable, that he will seldom attribute it to this. Such increased price will, however, not unfrequently have the good effect of rendering people more economical, and of thus occasioning them, without the irritating effect of direct taxation,

to conform in their mode of life to that more limited expenditure which prudence would suggest: instead, therefore, of purchasing the same quantity of such things, as would now cost more money, they will content themselves to purchase no more than what they may obtain for the sum they can afford to spend; while also they may hope, by increased exertions, soon to improve their circumstances and recover from such privation.

When taxes are judiciously imposed, they may, by stimulating industry, have even the good effect of improving the condition of a people, and increasing the general wealth and welfare of the community. And, I may here observe, that although many mistakes in taxation have, no doubt, been made in this country, such has been most remarkably the case; for though burdened with an unexampled amount of taxation, such as no country ever before experienced, it has rather stimulated exertion and promoted the progress of the nation in all ways to at least an equal degree, and does not seem to have impeded it in any way. Any one who will consult the late Mr. Porter's excellent work on the Progress of the Nation, or who has read the valuable pamphlet by Mr. Norman on the subject of taxation, may soon satisfy himself that the nation has both individually and collectively progressed in its wealth and welfare, notwithstanding the enormous contributions which it has been called on to make and to maintain to the public purse. Mr. Norman shows that, notwithstanding such taxation and the vast amount of our public debt, this nation still maintains a greater productive power, and is in a better condition to support its public expenditure and taxation than any other country whatever.

This can only happen from what has been observed above, namely, such an attention to those just principles of taxation which, while they require large contributions, do so in a manner which least of all impairs the productive powers of the country, while, at the same time, they least of all distress the person when called on to pay them; for, as observed before, when taxation is thus judiciously imposed, people will raise their energies to their circumstances, and will in general, by increased exertion, rise superior to their privations, so as ultimately even to make themselves better off than before. As necessity is also the parent of invention, people will in such case apply their talents to those various arts by which so much employment has been provided for industry, and by which industry the wealth and power of the country have been so astonishingly advanced.

Taxes are indeed, for the most part, paid out of the realized property of a country, and by the consumers of produce.

When they are laid directly on property, it is of course immediately obvious that they are paid out of property. When laid on the profits arising from the action of capital, business will soon regulate itself so as to enhance prices, and throw the tax on the purchaser of goods. As rent forms no part of a farmer's profits, a tax on rent falls on the landlord, excepting only such part as may be due to the interest of capital expended on farm buildings, &c., which, in that case, makes it fall so far on the profits of capital so expended. A tax on wages must, in the first instance, diminish profits; but as it will soon increase wages, that will again soon increase prices, so that this again will make the tax fall on the con-

sumer of produce. Indeed it must always be the case, that on the same principles which regulate supply and demand, when taxes, amongst other causes, either diminish production or in any way increase the value of goods, the purchaser will have to pay more for them, because the seller will always keep his own profits at a maximum as long as he can do so, and he will rarely consent to reduce them excepting only when driven to it by competition of traders in the same business.

But I must here make an important observation with reference to the effect of taxation in a country which has long been under the pressure of a standing debt. It is commonly supposed that a national debt must be a national calamity, in such sense that every person would immediately be better off and easier in his circumstances, if the debt were obliterated: this is, however, by no means the case; nor is it at all true of every one that the pressure of taxation falls at all upon him, although the property with which he may have to deal is burdened with it. Take, as an example, the case of a farmer. When he engages to take a farm consider what happens; expenses of every kind depend on the particular circumstances which affect the value of everything at the time. The farmer accordingly considers, first, what are the expenses of every kind which he will have to pay in conducting the business of his farm. Labour, prime cost and subsequent wear and tear of waggons, horses, harness, and all other implements of farming, expense of seed, tithe, taxes, poor rate, and all other outgoings; and with these he compares the returns which the farm will yield, that is, what he may be able to sell his produce for. The difference

remaining to him is the profit, out of which his rent is to be paid and his own advantages are to accrue; and there cannot be a doubt that whatever operates to reduce the balance which remains on this comparison, operates to the same extent in diminution of the rent which he would otherwise have to pay to the landlord, for, with exception of the pure expenses of cultivating the land, these are outgoings in respect of the land itself, and which accordingly is let to him at such a reduced value.

So, again, with respect to other property which may have changed hands under such a state of things: if a person give less for a property in consequence of its being liable to habitual taxation, his having afterwards to pay such tax is not, in reality, a tax on him, because it has been already remitted in the purchase. Everybody knows that an estate tithe free will sell for more than an estate subject to tithe, as also that it will let for a proportionably greater rent. In estimating, therefore, the effect of taxation, it should always be considered how and where its incidence falls; since, if a person commences business under such circumstances, he makes his arrangements with reference to them, and it is evident that there is nothing in them which has any tendency to prevent his success.

I might enlarge upon the subject of taxation, as indeed I might have been more particular and more minute, and more exact in what I have endeavoured to explain, but it has not been my purpose to write a profound Essay upon such a difficult subject; I have wished, however, to afford such readers as I hope may fall in with these Essays, so much acquaintance with the subject as, while it in-

structs them in the general principles of taxation, may, at the same time, disabuse them of some erroneous impressions respecting it.

Poor laws are also a tax of a particular and important character, but this I shall trust to reserve for separate treatment in one or more further Essays.

POOR LAWS. PART I.

IN primitive states of society there neither is nor can be such an establishment as a poor law. Man lives from hand to mouth: the law of the strongest prevails; and the infirm, aged, and otherwise incompetent, soon perish and disappear. Population is scant because of its pressure against the means of subsistence, while the necessity for unrelaxing exertion to procure food, precludes all cultivation of the mind; and it soon comes to be felt and understood, that the natural equality of mankind which is supposed to result from the rights of nature, has, in fact, no real and substantial existence; and that the only means by which such equality can be at all approached, is through that association and co-operation which resolves the members of a community into the state of civil society, under the government of laws, such as shall regulate the whole with a view to the protection and prosperity of all.

But although it be the object of civil government so to regulate and restrain the natural licentiousness of mankind as to prevent persons from encroaching on each other's natural rights, and thus to secure as near an approach to equality as may be compatible with the natural inequalities which mark and distinguish one person from another, it is not to be supposed that a poor law results immediately from the establishment of civil society.

The first object of society is to establish such an acknowledgment of man's natural rights as shall secure to him, by the power of the law, the right which he claims in his own industry, so that if, through the force of his natural abilities and energy, he should realize an amount of property beyond his own immediate requirements, he shall nevertheless be secured in the undisturbed possession of it, and be allowed to make use of it in any way for his own further advantage, so long as in so doing he does not injure his neighbour; and matters will go on for many years with but little advance in the direction of mutual assistance, until particular circumstances arise to suggest the various expedients by which the different interests of the several classes of a community may be in a manner harmonized and rendered subservient to one another.

Thus it was long ere a poor law of any sort existed in this country; for although laws enough affecting the poor were enacted from time to time, these were mostly passed for the purpose of regulating wages, restraining vagrancy, or of repressing, in some way or another, the restless spirit of vagabondism, which impelled idle and lawless people to rove about in despite of the laws, to the terror of all who were living quietly and maintaining themselves by their industry. It was not until the reign of Richard II that anything approaching to the principles of our present laws respecting the poor, can be distinctly recognized; neither was it, probably, until long after that the humane feeling, which influences the administration of the law so remarkably at the present time, began to operate.

In all states of society there will be a struggle between property and poverty, between the provident and the improvident, between the industrious and the idle; and

on the mode in which this struggle is conducted, and on the equilibrium established between these opposing influences, the social condition and general welfare of a people will, in a great measure, depend.

Poor laws may accordingly be considered as the concession made by the capable and generally prosperous members of a community, to the exigencies of the incapable and indigent; as made by those who actually do maintain themselves by the accumulations of industry, to those who either cannot or, in fact, do not do so.

They may, on the other hand, be regarded as the price or consideration paid by such as are enabled to accumulate property, in exchange for the protection and security which is accorded to them on the part of society, and without which it is most obvious that the weak must perish, while also the strong could only live from hand to mouth.

A poor law, therefore, it is evident, results from the necessities of nature, or from that original doom which condemned man "to eat his bread in the sweat of his face." This, while it necessitates exertion, instructs us how to economize it; and plainly tells us that if we would make the best use of our energies for our own purposes, we must also, in doing so, bring into the most effective operation, those sympathies and kindly feelings for one another which are comprehended in the religious duty of loving one another as ourselves; for it is plainly in this way only that we can, with the surest expectations, carry into effect the duty of our own self-support.

But if it be so, that both from sympathy and duty we are disposed and required to give to destitution what persons fail to earn for themselves, it is, at least, equally our duty, as it should be our feeling, so to regulate our

poor law as not, in reality, to create those exigencies which the laws are intended to relieve: for poor laws are, in fact, the charity of the community to such of its members as are unprosperous. Now the great end and object of charity, both as enjoined by religion and enforced by humanity, is to benefit those on whom it is bestowed; but if it be dispensed in such a manner as while it relieves existing want it has, nevertheless, no tendency to improve the condition of the recipient or to enable him to maintain himself, the effect must be rather to promote the evil, and cannot conduce either to the ultimate good of the object relieved or to that of the community.

The difficulties and complications which are necessarily involved in any general system of relief for the maintenance and well-doing of the poor, are obviously and confessedly great. The claims of indigence are conceded as paramount; and there can be no doubt but that the humane sympathies of the community are as extensive and strong as the pauperism which invokes them may be distressing and deep. There is, indeed, no unwillingness to spare from the prosperity of the country as much as can possibly be required to mitigate its indigence; but the *certain knowledge* which we must all now possess, derived from a long and accurate experience of the operation of our private charities, cannot but induce the conviction that nothing would so certainly increase the amount of pauperism, and, at the same time, exasperate its intensity, as any system of relief which should supersede the necessity of self-maintenance on the part of those who receive it.

When, therefore, the authorities to whom the administration of this important law is entrusted, seem to exert themselves both to withhold relief altogether from some,

while they abridge it as much as possible in regard to others, this should be looked at not in the light of an unwillingness to relieve real and distressing want, but in a more extended view, as an exercise of that due care for the interests of those who have to provide the fund, as well as for its effect on those on whom it is to be expended; which may assure all parties that it shall be usefully bestowed, and not spent in vain.

If the poor law be founded on the principle that every member of society is entitled to both life and maintenance from the common fund when he is unable to provide for himself, it follows, reciprocally, that every member of society, when not thus incapacitated, is under obligation to *contribute* to that common fund; for as the power and wealth of a community result from the associated exertion of its members, should any of them, instead of so contributing, hang upon the fund as dependents, the sum-total of the national wealth is not only abridged by the amount which they ought to contribute towards it, but yet further by that which they derive from it in their character of paupers.

It is accordingly of supreme importance that however the claims of destitution may be recognized, the claim also of society may be regarded as, at least, equal on the self-maintenance and combined exertion of all of its members, to promote the general prosperity as well as to share in its various mischances; for it was both to mitigate the doom of nature, and to enable us to assist each other in the daily effort we are constrained to make for our subsistence, that both the state of civil society and the poor law, as subsidiary to its purposes, were originally adopted.

POOR LAWS. PART II.

LAW is the consent and action of the whole body of a people as to the manner in which the purposes of society shall be carried into effect.

In the preceding Essay it was observed that if when a person finds himself unable to maintain himself by his own exertions, he be allowed a claim on the more successful exertions of his fellow citizens, a reciprocal obligation attaches to himself, such that, when able to do so, he should himself contribute to that common fund by which the life and property of the incapable and indigent may be maintained; and in doing which, the duty implied in the social compact is thus naturally made to harmonize with the divine obligation and command to love our neighbour as ourselves.

However obvious these views may be, when presented to the thoughtful and educated mind in an enlightened period, it cannot be supposed that it could be so in rude and uncultivated states of society in generally unenlightened times. These, like the dim-visioned or blind amongst individuals, have to grope their way through misconceptions and errors and practical difficulties, long before either what is proper is perceived, or what is perceived to be proper can be carried into effect: for as government is but the creature of those necessities which impel mankind

into the compact of society for mutual protection, so also it is from necessity alone, as it may arise, that laws are enacted and made to change, from time to time, with the varying circumstances of the world, and the alterations which they occasion in the views, and opinions, and actual requirements of mankind.

If in the state of nature, as before observed, the law of the strongest will prevail, so also in the earliest periods of civil society will it predominate: As, however, self-interest will continue to influence mankind, whether as individuals or as members of society, it can only be in more advanced and enlightened periods that this principle can be distinctly recognized as coincident with those mutual concessions by which alone the greatest amount of good can be secured through the means of civil government; for it is only when those who are unprosperous come to perceive their own interest in tolerating the prosperity of others, while also, at the same time, they who are prosperous acknowledge and make themselves the guardians and protectors of the indigent and of such as are not able to maintain themselves by labour, that a common interest in maintaining such relations with one another, can be duly appreciated and felt: and it is then only that the laws for regulating the claims of the indigent and the unfortunate, on the general wealth of a country, can assume the impress and form of such enlightened and systematic benevolence as that which characterizes the purposes and principles involved in the English poor laws at the present time.

The antagonistic principles of human nature will, however, still struggle on. Idleness will contend against industry, poverty against property, and population will,

in various ways, press hard against the means of subsistence, and this it is that constitutes alike the difficulty and the interest of providing for the general good; because, while the relief of those necessities which arise from incapacity or misfortune is no other than the exercise of a gratifying duty, it is both painful and difficult to relieve those whose necessities might have no existence but for that very benevolence which recognizes the claim of destitution, even though it may arise from improvidence or fault.

For it is, unhappily, an incident attaching to any system for the relief of the poor, that their claim on the common fund can only commence with a previous destitution. All, therefore, that can be done is to meet such a state of things as well as the circumstances of the occasion admit, yet, as far as may be, in such a way as not to hold out any encouragement to such as are the culpable authors of their own misfortunes.

From such difficulties arise the necessity for that careful, and possibly, at times, that overstrained economy in the administration of the poor law which all guardians of experience feel it a duty to exercise; for though the primary duty may seem to be to administer a fund provided to their hands for the benefit of the poor and needy, they cannot but reflect that, in doing so, they are equally charged with the duty of administering it conformably with the real interests of those whose industry has, in the first place, created it, and whose confidence has, in the next place, entrusted it to their discretion, for the purpose of being wisely and usefully expended.

In the statute of Richard, mentioned in the preceding Essay, we come, for the first time, to the distinction

between "beggars able to labour" and "beggars impotent to serve;" yet while these latter are recognized as incapable to maintain themselves, nevertheless no provision was at this time made for their support. They were directed to remain in the cities and towns where they were dwelling at the time of the proclamation of the statute; "and if the people of the cities and towns will not, or may not, suffice to *find* them (that is, if they be either unwilling or unable to maintain them), that then the said beggars shall *draw* them (that is, shall betake themselves) to other towns within the hundred, rape, or wapentake, or to the towns where they were born, within forty days after the proclamation made, and there shall continually abide during their lives."

Although, therefore, beggars impotent to serve are, by this statute, directed to remain for the rest of their lives where resident or born, they are nevertheless left to chance or to casual charity for their sustenance in such places: the object of this law, apparently, being not so much their support as the prevention of their wandering about the country in a needy and destitute condition.

But it must be observed, that so long as the great body of the people were held in a state of bondage, without individual rights and responsibilities; so long as they were the property of the owners of the soil (of which it may be almost said they formed a part), they could not be considered *poor* in the *legal* sense of the term. As they were the absolute property of their masters, so were the masters under corresponding responsibilities to provide for their wants, as the implied condition of their services.

No sooner, however, did this state of dependence on their masters cease, and the people begin to assert the

right of free action and to undertake their own natural responsibilities, than poverty or want, in various forms and degrees, presented themselves:—"*poverty*," from which there was no immediate escape, and "*want*," for which there was no directly appointed and legal relief.

A person set free from vassalage and thus pressed by his necessities, without anything to rely upon besides his own exertions, would often, and indeed quite unavoidably, become a wanderer.

If of honest and industrious habits, such person would become a wanderer in search of employment as the means of subsistence; if of idle, dishonest, or irregular propensities, he would wander into courses on the pretence of seeking work, but which would demoralize his character and lead him into crime.

As the number of such persons thus set free from bondage increased, the number of such wanderers would increase likewise, until the tendency to evil courses, and the power of working mischief, would render them a source of danger to the good order and welfare of society; for nothing can be more dangerous than ill-affected persons linked together by a common want, and sufficiently numerous and powerful to set at nought the laws and enforce their own disorderly wills.

Such, however, was the state of things which had, by degrees, been growing up, and against which—as before observed—legislation was directed with but apparently little success, from the time of Edward the First.

Although the statute of Richard the Second drew a distinction between the impotent and vagrant poor, yet as it made no provision for their support within the limits to which they were restricted, they would, as a matter of

course, if not of necessity, continue to resort to the places where they could most readily obtain the means of satisfying their wants.

It was no longer possible, therefore, to postpone the enactment of laws by which the really necessitous pauper might become entitled to relief from the surplus earnings of the nation's industry, while those unprincipled but able-bodied wanderers should be made not only to maintain themselves by work, but also to contribute their fair contributions towards the national wealth and prosperity.

POOR LAWS. PART III.

"THE progress of a nation in civil liberty follows regular laws. In old times of barbarism, a horde of invaders seize a foreign soil by force, and they parcel it out among their chiefs. This is feudalism. The nobles, at first the leaders and protectors of their own people, in time became their oppressors; then the kingly power arises, and establishes itself by the destruction of a hundred petty tyrannies. Strong in the support of his adherents, and in the sympathies of the conquered races, (long excluded from all political power and almost all civil rights,) the king prevails, until in time it becomes necessary to impose checks also upon him. Finally, the day comes when representative government is established, and power to be used for the good of all is diffused among all classes of the community."—*Sir G. Nicholls' Hist. Eng. Poor Law.*

It is plain that, in the detail of government, changes corresponding with the character of the governing power must take place; that which might (as of course) be the natural effect and consequence of one state of things, becomes unsuitable under another; and what might be intended and actually operate for the benefit of particular classes, can no longer be so when the classes themselves change or cease with the circumstances which called them into being.

The poor under the state of villeinage—when it was as

much the interest as the duty of the lords of the soil to maintain them on account of the services on which their own power depended—could not count upon that protection and maintenance when the lords had lost their power, and the serfs had acquired their independence.

When the monasteries and religious houses, which, for a long series of years, maintained a superstitious influence over the poor people, were dissolved, and the poor could no longer look to them for the maintenance which they had received in exchange for the spiritual subjection in which they had been held, a different condition of things immediately arose: they who had been content with the former conditions of their existence, became impatient under the disadvantages of that freedom which they had so much previously coveted; however desirable it might have appeared whilst they felt the constraint of an irksome servitude, they soon found that in giving them their freedom, it threw them on their own private and individual exertions, without any other resource for their daily bread.

But what were people to do who had never exchanged their independent labour for bread, who were thus thrown, in vast numbers, upon the community, without any arrangements having been made for their support, or any means provided by which they might see their way to maintain themselves.

It cannot appear surprising, now-a-days, that able-bodied persons, thus thrown destitute upon the world, should themselves fall back upon the primitive sentiment that "the world was made for man," and that if the arrangements of society failed to supply them with food, they might, without scruple, provide it for themselves.

Thus arose that difficulty which gave occasion to the vagrant laws, and those subsequent modifications of them which resulted in the enactment of that famous statute of Queen Elizabeth, which, to this day, constitutes—as it must always do—the foundation of our present poor law, because it embodies the true principles on which all public charity or benevolence should rest.

If the state of society were in any way unfavourable either to classes or to individuals, so that the government which it implies were calculated to prevent their doing for themselves, as members of society, as well as they would be likely to do in the state of nature, it might be allowed to such as fail to maintain themselves under the government of law, to try how they could make it out on principles of nature only; but when the experience of the world has forced mankind into society, and in that state all the unfortunate contingencies which can attach to the most infirm and helpless, either of mind or body, are so much better provided for than it is possible they could be in any other, it never can be allowed to individuals, or even to classes, to abandon and repudiate the condition of society on the pretence that a person who does not prosper in a society cannot be bound by its laws; because it is certain that he who does not thrive in a society whose general prosperity is undoubtedly the effect of its social arrangements, and which are fostered and protected by its laws, must owe his ill-success, not to the laws, but to his own fault or inaptitude to apply these arrangements to the purposes of his well-doing. All that can be required in such case is that where the purposes of society thus altogether fail, it should do, even for such persons, that which they are themselves unable to make it do for them.

The great object of the most early pauper legislation seems to have been, as before observed, the restraint of vagrancy: this was the 12th Richard II, 1388.

Then came 11th Henry VII, 1495, which required beggars not able to work to go to the hundred where they last dwelled, or were best known, or were born, without begging out of the hundred. Then 19th Henry VII, 1504, which required them to go to the city, town, or hundred, where they were born, or to the place where they last abode for the space of three years, without begging out of the said city, town, hundred, or place. Then 22nd Henry VIII, 1531, directed justices to assign to impotent poor a limit within which they might beg, and to punish them for begging out of such limit, as also to punish, yet more severely, any able-bodied person who should beg within such limit.

Five years afterwards, however, was passed the 27th Henry VIII, 1536, which is remarkable as having first introduced the system of compulsory charity, and which, it is also remarkable, was resorted to as the best or only means of suppressing vagrancy.

This statute, after requiring and empowering various official persons in towns and places to collect alms for the impotent poor, and to set the able-bodied on work—which it recites had not been done in former statutes—proceeds to require that the money collected should be kept in a common box in the church, or committed to the care of a substantial trusty man, to be delivered as necessity should require: and it is remarkable that, having thus made the care of the impotent and the setting to work of the able-bodied a national concern, the statute proceeds to require that "almsgiving," otherwise than to these com-

mon boxes or common gatherings, or to fellow-parishioners or prisoners, shall be discontinued, on forfeiture of ten times the amount.

The intention of thus assigning limits to all persons who were either unable to procure or to do work, was to bring them to the knowledge of the proper authorities, in order that they might be dealt with according to law; but to this statute, unfortunately, such severe punishments were annexed, that it did not operate so beneficially as was intended, and it was soon repealed by the 3rd and 4th Edward VI, 1450, and the 22nd Henry VIII was revived.

The 27th Henry VIII imposed a fine on the parish in which the impotent poor should not be relieved, and directed the surplus collection of rich parishes to be applied for the relief of the poor parishes within the same hundred. The 1st Edward VI and the 5th and 6th Edward VI, directed the parson, vicar, or churchwardens of each parish, to appoint collectors and to obtain contributions for the relief of the poor, which was an evident approach towards making the relief of the poor a parochial charge; and it would seem that the *ecclesiastical* division of parishes was preferred to any *civil* division, on account of the part which the clergy were required to take in the business.

But the severity of punishment annexed to these statutes rendered them, for the most part, inoperative, as may easily be supposed; for it is in vain to enact laws, and to attempt their enforcement, if they do not harmonize with the feeling of the people, whose sanction must, after all, be necessary to their being carried into due effect.

Even in those rude times, people would not sanction a severity of punishment on persons who, however faulty,

were more the objects of their compassionate sympathies than of any penal desert; for there is a wide distinction between persons who have resorted to crime only to satisfy the cravings of hunger, and those who, having no experience of want, do nevertheless choose to eat the bread of other people's industry. Other laws were passed, some of them recognizing the inefficiency of former statutes; and the justices of the peace were entrusted with the duty and authority to enquire into the state of the poor, and to enforce the laws respecting them.

At length, on the 27th October, 1601, was passed the famous statute, the 43rd Elizabeth, which may be justly considered as the foundation of the laws under which the rates for the relief of the poor are administered at the present time; because it comprises the true principles on which alone such laws can be rightly established and maintained: and it is a happiness that our duties, as respects the poor, being no less serious and difficult of discharge now than at any former period, we are enabled to stand upon a basis of such valuable experience in the efforts we make to carry the provisions of our important poor laws into due and proper effect.

In the discharge of this duty it is impossible but that the poor must also themselves see and feel that the purposes of the country are as compassionate and sympathizing with respect to misfortune and the destitution thence arising, as they could have any reason to expect.

All parties, indeed both those who pay and those who receive the rate, must be conscious that the primary duty of us all is to maintain ourselves, each by his own industry; and that it is only when this fails that we can be justified, on any moral or social considerations, in falling back upon

the benevolent sympathies and industrious exertions of our fellow-citizens; but when unprincipled persons, by their idle and depraved habits of life, render themselves destitute as the only available means of becoming entitled to partake of the poor-rate fund, all must agree that it should be meted out to them with the most sparing hand.

Such persons indeed, although neither the law nor our own humanities would allow them to starve, are the proper subjects of its penal enactments. But how difficult, under all circumstances, it is to prevent the abuses of this admirable national charity, and how difficult also so to carry into due effect all its benevolent purposes, without, at the same time, giving occasion for abuse, not only in those who receive it but also in those who have to pay it, the next Essay shall attempt to explain.

But it is to be most seriously hoped that persons would exert themselves to give the best effect within the range of their influence, to the just operation of the law as now enacted: for while it may be so administered as to approve itself a great national blessing to those who, in the struggle of life, are not able to make themselves prosperous through the instrumentality of the general laws, there can be no doubt it may also be so unwisely administered as very seriously to aggravate the worst evils of a depraved pauperism, as all experienced guardians would admit who have witnessed the effect of not drawing a due distinction in the dispensation of relief between those who *can* and those who *cannot*, those who *will* and those who *will not*, maintain themselves.

POOR LAWS. PART IV.

IN the year 1834 appeared the report of a commission appointed to enquire into the administration and practical operation of the poor laws.

Sound as the principles of the 43rd Elizabeth confessedly are, and wise as the provisions were for carrying that law into effect, it had become, nevertheless, manifest that the country was burdened with an increasing population of pauper and vagrant persons, and that there must exist some causes in operation which it had become imperatively and unavoidably necessary to enquire into, in order to correct a state of things which so seriously threatened to affect the general interests of the country in a manner very disastrous to its welfare; for it was certain that it was not depraved people only amongst the poor who abused the law so as to abstract from it that maintenance which they ought to and could earn for themselves, but, that amongst the ratepaying classes also, a system had come in various ways to obtain by which they, in turn, abused the law, by administering it in such a way as enabled them to employ poor people at inadequate wages while they received the whole of their work.

This, of course, could only be done in one of those ways by which, on the ground of relieving a poor man who would otherwise, with his family, become a heavy burden

on the parish, persons would give employment to such poor people at inadequate wages, on the understanding that an addition to such wages, sufficient to make up a maintenance, should be afforded from the poor rate.

The justification of such a proceeding was that the parish rate was thus saved by the difference between full maintaining wages and the wages the working man consented to accept.

The effect of this was—as of course it must be—injurious in every way, upon all classes and upon the country generally; for it not only destroyed the principle of supply and demand, on which employment, like all other productive elements, should proceed, but it also sunk the distinction between skilled and unskilled labour, and all those other considerations which might tend to regulate labour as between work-people and their employers, so that a due balance of profits should remain between capitalists and those who produce the work; for in this system the character and qualifications of the working man seem to form no element in the conditions of his employment. It was considered only on the part of the parish how the rate might be saved, and on the part of the employer how he might obtain the most work at the least wages. And so it came to pass that whole parishes became pauperized; all working men were employed on this principle; there was scarcely such a thing as independent labour.

He who had the largest family would, in general, be the most sure of employment, while also he would receive the largest amount of parish relief; and the single man found himself almost under the necessity of marrying as the only or readiest means of obtaining the combined maintenance of wages and the poor rate.

How short-sighted the employers of labour were in adopting such a system as this, and how the country came ultimately to suffer from the spread of pauperism and the demoralized condition of the labouring man, was felt severely enough at that time, from the manifest necessity which existed for and resulted in the commission of enquiry. It was especially lamentable to see exemplified in all classes that deplorable characteristic of human nature which would thus violate both law and duty for its own advantage, when not laid under sufficiently binding obligations of self-interest to do as we would be done by.

At page 8 (at the very outset of their Report) the commissioners thus express themselves:—

"It is now our painful duty to report that, in the greater part of the districts which we have been able to examine, the fund which the 43rd Elizabeth directed to be employed in setting to work children and persons capable of labour but using no daily trade, and in the necessary relief of the impotent, is applied to purposes opposed to the letter and still more to the spirit of that law, and destructive to the morals of the most numerous class and to the welfare of all."

As the manner in which the fund raised for the relief of the poor was misapplied is now understood, and such misapplication, it may be hoped, is not likely to occur under the new or present law (imperfect though in particular respects it is), it will be sufficient here to explain it in passing on to the statement of the provisions of the new "poor law," which I propose briefly to subjoin.

Relief was afforded to paupers either in a workhouse where they were subjected to various employment, or out of the workhouse where it was supposed they were not

able to live without such addition to their means; it was also afforded either in money or in food, or in a proportion of both.

Although it is quite possible that an abuse of the poor law may take place through an improper admission of a pauper into the workhouse, inasmuch as no person ought to be admitted who has the power and opportunity of maintaining himself out of it: the principal abuse of the old poor law occurred with reference to able-bodied persons, and with respect to out-of-door poor relief; on which account it has been considered that workhouses, under proper regulation, should be made the test of destitution, so that able-bodied persons applying for relief on the allegation of want of work, this should be at once afforded them in the workhouse, but subject to the discipline and employment of such establishments.

It may indeed be true that however well disposed an able-bodied person may be, he may be nevertheless unable to procure employment, in which case the law is as properly applicable to his relief as to any that may arise from inability or other unfortunate cause. So also it may be true that a person may be so partially disabled as to be incompetent to his entire self-support, in which case also the law is equally applicable to his partial relief; and in neither case is it a matter of course that the workhouse should be the means by which relief should be afforded.

The object of a test of destitution is to secure that imposition be not attempted; but in all cases relief should be dispensed on principles which tend to prevent future, while it provides for present, need; so that to apply the test of the workhouse to cases in which the applicant is thus prevented from securing opportunities of employ-

ment and of future self-support, would be wrong; and it is here that, while a wholesome superintendence should be exercised over boards of guardians, they should, by all means, be invested with considerable discretion, as they alone, from their local knowledge, can tell how to apply the law in those exceptive cases in which the principles of the law are best observed by a departure from its usual application.

In proportion as pauperism was great, the poor-rate was burdensome; it was therefore, perhaps, not surprising that persons should avail themselves of their opportunities to lighten this burden upon themselves by every practicable expedient, and accordingly various efforts were made in parishes by persons of influence, and they would naturally prefer those modes of relief which they could turn to their own account, and out of which they could, in reality, extract profit under the mask of charity.

But the great source of abuse in this law was in the various modes adopted of administering out-relief to able-bodied persons either on their own account or on that of their families; and relief was afforded either in money or in kind, as observed before.

When administered in kind, it was usually afforded by relieving paupers from the payment of rent for their houses, which, however intended for the benefit of the poor, had only the effect of ultimately increasing the rents; while also, in another respect, this injured the poor most seriously by occasioning the cottages which were extensively built, in expectation that they would not be charged with poor-rate, to be so ill constructed that at length the very habits of the respectable poor were demoralized by having to dwell in such unfit habitations.

But the abuses connected with out-relief afforded in money were more prevalent. They were effected in several customary ways, and were known under concise and appropriate designations:—first, relief without labour, which consisted of a daily or weekly sum of money given to the pauper on the supposition that he was without employment, and this without requiring from the applicant any labour in return.

This was adopted from the notion that the parish would, at least, gain the difference between the cost of the pauper's maintenance and what he might consent to take under this system of relief: it was also supposed that people would be better able to seek work for themselves under this arrangement than they could while employed by the parish.

Then we have, second, the allowance system, which, in principle, is much the same as what has been already observed upon. The allowance system was that by which parochial relief was afforded to able-bodied persons, although, at the time, employed at the *average wages* of the district; such wages being supposed insufficient, under the circumstances, for the proper maintenance of such able-bodied persons and their families.

What must be the condition of a country when a large and most important class of its operative population are systematically reduced to the necessity of working for wages so insufficient for their maintenance that they are forced to apply to their parishes, as paupers, for such relief from the poor-rate as may enable them to live.

Here, then, is a country proud of its wealth and power and boasting of its freedom, while a most important and numerous class of its population, that through whose

manual exertions its wealth is produced, are reduced to the condition of a people whose industry will not suffice to put their daily bread into their mouths; but who, while they contribute their industry to their country's wealth and power and welfare, instead of being able to present themselves as independent men living on their own share of the nation's substance, are put into the condition of unfortunate or incompetent persons dependent upon a nation's bounty for their daily bread; and to what extent this was done may be conjectured from the fact that the poor-rate of this country in one year amounted to about eight millions sterling.

If there be one truth more plain than another, it must be that when a man's labour does not yield him a maintenance, there must exist the want of a due balance between the profits of trade and the labour which produces them; for if the wages of labour will not maintain the working man, while the capitalist is unable to conduct his business without loss, the business itself cannot answer to either of them; but if, while the capitalist is thriving upon his profits, the working man is unable to live by his wages, it is clear that either an injurious competition exists, of which the employer takes undue advantage, or that, for the causes above suggested, the employers avail themselves of their opportunities to throw upon the poor-rate, in the form of relief, that addition to the workman's wages which they ought to pay to good and competent workmen out of their own profits, as the workman's share of a thriving business; but no business can prosper where those on whose industry it depends, are forced to look out of the employment for the means of their daily bread: when either of them falls under the necessity of resorting to the

resources of other people's industry to make up the deficiencies of their own, it is plain that they must impair and injure the business of those on whom they thus depend, so long as they conduct their own in this losing way.

If a person cannot live by his own trade, instead of making up his deficiencies by gifts or charity from the funds of others, common sense at once suggests the expediency, not to say necessity, of resorting to some other and more profitable occupation.

It is indeed surprising that such a resort was not more frequently and more extensively and systematically adopted, inasmuch as, besides the reason of the thing, experience was not wanting amongst the working population themselves, to show that the *price* of labour would always bear a proportion to the *amount* of labour required to be done; for wages, like all other things of a marketable value, would follow the usual laws of supply and of demand.

If, therefore, a systematic emigration, such as recently produced such an augmentation of wages in Ireland, by reducing competition and improving the demand for work, or a resolute resort to other occupation had animated the labouring population,—if better instructed and influential persons had encouraged and prepared labouring people for such enterprises when their numbers seemed to exceed the demand for their work; this would not only have precluded or remedied such a sad state of things as above described, but would have been attended with other most beneficial effects.

As it could not have been even attempted without improvements of education, and other excitements of the energies, both moral and physical, of the people, the effect

of so assisting to provide employment elsewhere for poor persons without occupation, must, in every way, have tended to relieve industry at home and to promote it abroad, and, in so doing, to stimulate and improve the nation's wealth and power, and to augment its general welfare and prosperity

Third. Another mode of relief was called the Roundsman System. This expedient consisted of the parish paying the occupiers of property to employ the applicants for relief at a rate of wages fixed by the parish, and depending not on the services but on the wants of the applicants; the employer being repaid out of the poor-rate all that he advanced in wages beyond a certain sum.

If, in this expedient, the parish induced persons to employ labour who otherwise might not have done so, it is plain that persons would affect to employ labour only because the parish rendered it worth their while to do so, by enabling them to engage a man's whole work at very low wages; thus, as before, the effect was most injurious and depressing as respects the labouring man. No wonder a poor man should answer one of the commissioners thus, "It would be better to be slaves at once than to work under such a system, half wages and half relief from the parish."—p. 47.

Fourth. Another mode of relief was parish employment; which consisted in the parish providing employment for and paying the applicants for relief.

This system indeed did not afford direct profit to any individual like the systems previously mentioned, which enabled the immediate employers of labour to throw on the parish a part of the wages of their labourers; but it was attended with very injurious effects, *e.g.* "the collect-

ing the paupers in gangs for the performance of parish work, was found in practice to be more injurious to their conduct than even the allowance system or the system of relief without requiring work. Whatever were the general character of the parish labourers, all the worst of the inhabitants are sure to be among the number; and it was well known that the effect of such an association was always to degrade the good, not to elevate the bad. It was among these gangs, that had scarcely any other employment or amusement than to collect in groups and talk over their grievances, that the riots of 1830 appear to have originated."

Fifth. The last expedient in this category was the labour-rate system. This was an agreement among the rate-payers that each of them should employ, and pay out of his own money, a certain number of the labourers who have settlements in the parish, in proportion, not to his real demand for labour, but according to his rental, or to his contribution to the rates, or to the number of horses that he kept for tillage, or to the number of acres that he occupied, or according to some other scale.

This expedient appears to have been resorted to under the impression that there were more labourers than work for them, and consequently that it would be a relief to the parish, and some advantage to those rate-payers who would have to support such paupers by poor-rate, if they were engaged to do some measure of work for the relief they were to receive; and thus they received relief in the way of employment which was not required, and were paid not for work really done, but, under the arrangement, were paid, as wages, so much only as was considered necessary for their maintenance.

The object of all these expedients was to give employment to an existing population upon a principle of public charity, it being supposed that there was not a sufficient demand for their labour to admit of their earning a maintenance from the profits of business.

Thus, as has been shown, the whole labouring population became subjected to a rate of wages which was insufficient for their maintenance; and the various expedients which were resorted to to give employment, reduced the poor people, who were thus insufficiently paid, to become in part dependent upon the poor-rate.

The independence of the poor man was thus destroyed; he became depressed in spirit and debased in character; until at length the just fears of the country, on account of the demoralized condition of the working population, added to the consciousness that the abuses of the system were producing the worst and most alarming evils, sought a remedy in the new poor law, our present system.

THE NEW POOR LAW.

THE New Poor Law, as it is now usually called, is not so much a new law as a new mode of administering the old law. The maladministration of the old law had resulted in that sad condition of the working population which was explained in the last Essay. I shall now endeavour to explain the mode by which it is hoped to correct such a state of things, and to restore the operation of the salutary principles of the 43rd Elizabeth to that wholesome efficiency in which the present and prospective welfare of all classes may be promoted through the instrumentality of this important national charity.

The old law was administered, for the most part, by parish vestries through the agency of the overseers, and under the guiding influence and authority of the local magistrates, that is, of the justices of the peace for counties in petty and quarter sessions; and really it is not surprising, considering the ideas then so generally prevalent respecting charity, and previously to any collected record of facts bearing on the subject, or any connected view of what the effect of such an administration of the law must be, that it should have continued in such state so long as it did; for it must be admitted that private influences may consist, to a great extent, with very generous and benevo-

lent public purposes, and it is evident, from what has been already shown in the last Essay, that the evils of the old system arose from the effort constantly made to benefit the working man at the least sacrifice to those who had to pay the rates.

Although, however, the labouring population had become so demoralized, and were rendered so generally destitute by such an ill-advised system, it must not be supposed that they were themselves no parties to it,—this, unhappily, was far from being the case; on the contrary, so attached were they in general to it, and so generally insensible were they to its injurious effects on themselves personally and on the interests of their class, that when the evils had forced themselves on the convictions of all enlightened minds, and had become apparent to almost all other persons besides, the poor people were amongst the last to perceive the necessity for any change.

There were indeed amongst them not a few, perhaps, high-minded enough to feel personally that they were entitled to a better and more independent position, and who were ashamed of that half-pauper and half-working condition to which such a system had degraded them, and from which they could devise no escape; but the great majority who had become habituated to earn but little by work, while they could obtain so much from the rate, were not well satisfied with a change, the object of which was to reverse this and to provide the means by which they should be expected and made to earn their own daily bread in an independent way by their own daily labour.

There were persons also, from whose generally enlightened sentiments a more just and immediate approval of the new poor law might have been expected, who yet

denounced it as opposed to every sound principle of humanity, and as fraught with harsh and cruel treatment towards the poor, while again some of the most influential of the newspaper press rendered themselves in aid of such views.

It has, however, well approved itself to all who have been seriously engaged in the practical duty of carrying the law into effect; and these persons are ready to appeal, with the well-grounded confidence of their own experience, to this particular consideration in its favour, namely, that while the population of the country has greatly increased, the poor-rate has as greatly diminished; while, at the same time, the poor people themselves are decidedly better off, as respects their general condition and means of life, than they were at any time before.

In affording relief to the helpless, aged, and infirm, on the principles of the 43rd Elizabeth, the object of the present system is to accomplish this by the method of a subordination of authority in the administration of the law; so that while the particular duties of each are prescribed and clearly defined, they may each, in their order, be responsible for the due discharge of their own functions to the authority to which they may be immediately answerable; and the general expenditure is submitted to a periodical audit, at which the auditor is bound to disallow any item in the accounts which is not authorized by the law.

The supreme authority is vested in a central body denominated commissioners, who preside over the whole department of management. A code of general instructions, issuing from this body, prescribes the detail by which the principles of the law are to be made to operate;

while also all questions of difficulty and doubt are referred to this body, and decided on their opinion and authority.

In localities, boards of guardians, consisting of duly qualified persons elected in the districts which comprise the several poor law unions, and also of all justices of the peace acting within such districts, meet at workhouses provided for the unions, and there receive and determine applications for relief.

The union workhouses are under the immediate charge of a master and matron, and are so constructed as to be applicable to the several classes of applicants and modes of relief, while—as the name imports—they are also adapted to set on work such paupers received therein as may be competent to labour.

Relieving officers are persons chosen and duly appointed by the guardians, with the approbation of the central commissioners. It is their duty to receive applications for relief, to report such applications to the boards of guardians, and, in all cases, to make themselves so generally acquainted with the state and condition of the poor people of their districts, and with the particular circumstances of those who do actually apply for relief, as on their report to enable the guardians to decide in what manner and in what measure relief should be afforded.

These officers have also a considerable discretion and power in the intervals between the sessions of the boards of guardians, during which, urgent cases must be relieved on their own judgment and responsibility, and be subsequently reported to the guardians for approval or otherwise.

The function of relieving officer is very important, and ought most carefully to be delegated only to persons of

good sense as well as of benevolent disposition,—to persons who to such qualifications add an energy to discharge their important duties with that soundness of judgment which a knowledge of the circumstances of the ratepayers, not less than of the rate-receivers, implies on the part of any one who may be really qualified for so important and arduous a task.

The guardians are assisted by a clerk, an officer of the utmost importance, and whose services can scarcely be over estimated when they are performed by a person of real competency; for he has to advise the guardians with respect to matters of law, to conduct their correspondence, to keep the accounts, to regulate the calls upon the rates, and is, in fact, an agency without whom the business of an union could scarcely be conducted at all.

Medical officers also are most important to the interests of an union, not only with respect to the poor people who are immediately under these officers' medical advice and care, but inasmuch as it often depends on the opinion of the medical officer whether a poor person is, in reality, so ill as to require relief, and how, if ill, such poor person should be relieved, in various respects, so as to promote his recovery.

Such is the principal machinery for carrying into effect this important law; and it must be obvious, from the character and independent position of the official persons mentioned, that whatever may be the mistakes into which they may occasionally fall, it is, at least, unlikely that they should fall into that of any combination to defeat the purposes of the law, or to make it operate in any manner different from its intended effect, namely, that of providing food, clothing, and shelter, for the aged and infirm, and

for such as, from misfortune, are incapable of providing for themselves, while, at the same time, the able-bodied and such as are capable of self-maintenance are constrained to earn their own daily bread; and I should hope that no one with any proper feelings can contemplate this whole subject with any other than the most sincere desire that it may accomplish its important purposes.

COLONIZATION AND EMIGRATION.

I HAVE often wondered that a country possessing fine colonies in different parts of the world, and in which the great and pressing demand is for a supply of that very population whose excess in the parent state constitutes such serious and embarrassing considerations, as it has done in this country, should not long ago have adopted and carried into effect some well-advised scheme of colonization, so as, at the same time, to provide the means of self-support for such population, and by their employment to promote the welfare of the colony itself, with a view to its ultimate establishment as a prosperous and independent community.

We have seen, in previous Essays, how such a population, either wholly unemployed or employed only at wages which are not sufficient for a man's maintenance, becomes reduced to the condition of a more or less degraded pauperism, too frequently manifesting the immoralities which such a state of dependence can scarcely fail to occasion, and which of course it must be as much the duty, as it certainly is the policy, of the government of a well-ordered community as much as possible to prevent.

There is no condition of mankind in which the pressure of population against the means of support will not always constitute the grand difficulty of human life; verifying the

primæval doom, that man should "eat his bread in the sweat of his face." If we must eat to live, so also must we live to eat; and the important problem accordingly must be how to provide the means by which employment may be made to keep pace with the increase of population, and so that every person born into the world may find the world ready and adequate to reward his industry by a sufficient maintenance.

It is the purpose and object of civil society to stimulate industry as well as to accumulate and economise its productions, and this seems to be the only means by which any considerable increase of population can take place or be enabled to live; for it was shown in some one of the earlier of these short Essays that society could not otherwise progress, but must inevitably retrograde and lapse ultimately into that original state in which, at the best, man could only live from hand to mouth.

But though it be true that in this way employment may be provided to a really astonishing amount, whilst also, at the same time, the comforts of life are most astonishingly promoted, it is yet equally true that, by the same means and to a like amount, population will keep pace with the increase of a nation's resources, so that the pressure of the one against the other will exist pretty much the same under one condition of society as under another; and all that can be done is to meet the demand for food by every means that may offer, and by every exertion to augment the productive power of labour, and of that science by which we are enabled to controul the powers of nature, so as to render them subservient to the uses of mankind.

That the productive powers of man are very great when thus exerted may be readily understood, even from the

very general consideration of the age of the world itself, which is yet but partially inhabited, notwithstanding the vast populations which have come into and gone out of existence; while also the revelations of modern science have taught us that the earth may, and may be made to, yield many times more than it has ever yet been known to do, under improved methods of cultivation.

When Abraham and Lot (as we read in the Book of Genesis) began to experience the difficulties of maintaining themselves in the same spot, because of the numbers of dependents and of cattle and animals constituting the substance of their wealth, it was the immediate suggestion of Abraham to his nephew that there was no occasion for difficulty or strife between them, inasmuch as, although the land where they sojourned together was not able to bear them, there was yet the whole world before them; and, said Abraham, "Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt go to the left hand, I will take the right; or if thou depart to the right, then will I go to the left: only let there not be strife between thee and me, and between thy herdsmen and my herdsmen." —*Genesis* xiii. So they parted.

The preceding Essays on the poor laws have explained the sad and demoralized state to which the working population of this country was, for many years, reduced from excessive population and limited employment, and also because, while the working population increased, the fund on which it depended for maintenance remained stationary or even diminished: for when a limited fund has to be shared equally, as wages, by an increasing number of labouring persons, the proportion of each, thus diminishing, must of course become, in time, too small for his own

individual maintenance; and hence the necessity which made up the deficiency of the poor man's wages by the poor-rate, and which occasioned that sad state of things.

But is it not surprising that, under such circumstances, and, as the venerable patriarch, Abraham, observed, "with the land before them," such a sad state of things should have been tolerated so long; and that neither the government of the country should have promoted colonization, nor the people have sought relief in emigration?

In considering the subject of colonization and of emigration, there can be no difficulty in determining the duty of a parent country, nor any in estimating the relative duties of the country as a whole, and of its citizens as individual members of the community.

Nature has prescribed the principles on which both should proceed,—the one in nurturing and educating and finally establishing the colony, while the individual citizen should assist the government of the parent country by conforming to such regulations as may promote the purposes of his government; and while, in doing so, he also provides for his own personal welfare and prosperity. If a parent possess the means of providing satisfactorily for his child near home, he will naturally do so; while the child will as naturally prefer being established in the neighbourhood of his parents and nearest relations: it is equally natural that he should prefer even a comparatively limited prosperity in his native land, to a more extended prosperity remote from his most fond associations abroad: but there are considerations superior to these; and there are but few judicious parents who will not cheerfully sacrifice much of the interests which would attach relations to home and keep them all together, when

he has a good opportunity to secure for his family the more substantial advantages which can be found only in the wide field of the world.

What a person may naturally desire is not always the same as what it becomes him to do; and the real and substantial good of life depends very much on the manner in which a person will act when inclination and natural bias are more or less opposed to the requirements of prudence and of duty.

It is no inconsiderable virtue when the principles of duty are so far established in the mind as to determine the conduct conformably with them, and much satisfaction will ensue in reflecting on having so acted; but the highest condition of the human mind, and which it should be our aim to cultivate, is that in which the tendencies of nature are so subservient to the requirements of duty as that we wish for nothing until we have previously ascertained what it is that we ought to desire. This may seem utopian: it is nevertheless a practical and important truth; for a person will assuredly make his way in the world the best who is best able to concentrate his energies on that which it is most desirable and practicable to do. "When wisdom," says Solomon, "entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant to thy taste, discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee." Nor can any one doubt that, when pleasure and duty thus harmonize and become identical, a person will be in a most favourable condition to realize the most important objects of human existence.

In urging the importance of such a frame of mind, I am not unaware that the bonds of nature are strong, so that it requires, at times, a painful effort and exertion

to surrender natural feelings to the suggestions or even convictions of prudence and of duty. Such considerations are, however, the foundations on which the superstructure of a prosperous life ought to be laid; and there can be no doubt it is not only our highest wisdom and happiness thus to act in this world, but there can be no doubt it is no more than religion itself could be shown to require, were this the place, or it were here my object, to explain and enforce its sacred obligations with respect to such matters as these.

Patriotism and the feelings of family are pretty much the same in these respects; but if a parent in private life will, in general, be found to consider and provide for the real interests of his child, by putting him forth into the world under circumstances which separate him from his offspring, surely a country, in which no such feeling as that of reluctance to part with a member for his own benefit can have any existence, ought to feel every desire to assist any one of its citizens to seek elsewhere that means of self-support which he cannot find at home; and so also should the private citizen, on his own part, desire to seek elsewhere that self-support which the country finds it difficult to provide for him at home,—for these duties are reciprocal: so that unless the government and the people of a country will assist each other, they must both stand in the way of each other's interests, and the country must suffer accordingly in its general welfare.

All businesses are liable to fluctuations and occasional depressions, and it may sometimes even become necessary to discontinue particular businesses altogether, and to seek some other and more remunerative occupation. When

the profits of trade and wages fall below the rate at which trade may be regarded as prosperous, then it is that change of occupation becomes necessary, unless indeed—which amounts to the same thing—a change of situation can be effected, by which the same trade which has ceased to be profitable in one locality, may be transferred to and conducted with advantage in another.

But as all communities must, in some respects, have the same wants, what can be more fortunate for an old country than the power of transferring its surplus trade and people to colonies in which the demand exists for the very trades and people which are in excess and no longer profitable within itself. By judicious arrangements indeed, the parent country may thus, at the same time, not only and merely relieve itself of a serious difficulty,—that of having to provide for a population for whom it has no occupation,—but, in doing so, may positively confer a benefit at once, both upon the poor people themselves, and upon the colony which is in need of their help; and thus, instead of having to deplore the very existence of a population so demoralized, as we have seen it is inevitable that it must become while existing in excess in the parent state, it becomes a matter of the utmost satisfaction that, under such arrangements, it is made a blessing to the colony, to the mother country, and to itself, from being thus put into the way of fulfilling the natural conditions of human existence.

If established communities possess colonies, it seems to me not only that, in point of policy, they may be thus employed as the means of relieving the parent in its difficulties, when its population becomes excessive and employment is scarce, but that it is incumbent on the parent

communities to train a population for and facilitate its establishment in its colonies, in order that they may themselves, in time, become prosperous and independent communities.

It has been observed, in a former Essay, that it is to the difficulties of life that we owe those various and multiplied inventions by which the various wants and conveniencies and comforts of life have been so largely provided; and it is the same difficulties which have necessitated the dispersion of mankind over the surface of the earth.

If it be the policy and duty of a parent country to promote colonization, in order that its citizens may emigrate and settle with the greater advantage when it becomes necessary or expedient to do so, it is no less the duty, as well as policy, of the child of the country to emigrate and colonize when he finds himself unable to maintain an independent position in the parent state; for colonization and emigration are reciprocal, and should mutually promote each other for their common benefit.

The sad state of things mentioned in the Essays upon the Poor Laws, and the still existing difficulties and serious inconveniencies arising from the pressure of population on the means of life, ought indeed to turn the thoughts of people to this subject more than they seem to do, though some allowance may be due to unfortunate persons, who naturally feel diffident of realizing that success from their exertions elsewhere which they have failed to realize at home. It is on this account that not only enterprising persons who have strength of character and energy of purpose to cope with the peculiar difficulties of the colony, should be encouraged to emigrate, and that

the parent state should lessen such difficulties as much as possible; but these difficulties should be lessened more expressly in favour of such persons just above mentioned, who fear to undertake in the colony what they have been unable to do at home; and indeed it cannot be denied that there are persons everywhere who are not qualified to maintain themselves independently anywhere, and who must live dependent in any and every community. I have rather been speaking of persons who have failed from opportunity and stress of circumstances, but who, if fairly tested, would neither shrink from the requisite exertion nor prove themselves unequal to it; while also there are many others who, though not, perhaps, equal to the severest tests of an emigrant's qualifications, would maintain themselves fairly by work were work to be had, and for whom there would be many in the colony to require their services.

But that colonization and emigration should go hand-in-hand and promote each other, the government should encourage it systematically and afford facilities in the colony to enable emigrants to cope with first difficulties. More than all, however, it should be the business of government to establish a political and judicial system in the colony, such as should give confidence and assurance to all settlers that the same protection to person and property should attend them in the colony as at home; while they should be able to observe that the colony is so established as to indicate every fair prospect of rising, in due time, to the dignity and importance of an independent state.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES AND SAVINGS' BANKS.

It is, happily, not necessary to say much in commendation of these important institutions. Their general establishment throughout the United Kingdom is not only, in itself, a testimony to their value, but shows also that a large population are both influenced with the desire and do also possess the ability to live upon less than their incomes, and lay by money for extraordinary occasions; placing it either in Savings' Banks to accumulate for emergencies or old age, or, by the means of Friendly Societies, providing aid on the contingencies of sickness, and such other advantages as are secured by these associations to their members on the principle of mutual assurance.

It is well observed in the Companion to the British Almanack for the year 1829, that "the possession of a small sum of money beforehand, conduces very much to substantial comfort and independence." However small may be a person's income, there is one certain way of increasing it, that is, by frugality; and frugality commenced in early life will prevent nearly all the miseries and degradations that invariably accompany improvidence. The habit of saving is not only valuable in itself, but it leads to habits of sobriety, order, and general good conduct; and these habits will not only enable a person

to enjoy life with more zest, and much longer than the short and dearly-bought gratifications of sensual indulgence, but will ensure him to pass through the world with the approbation of his own conscience, and to leave it with that inward peace which is the best reward of virtue.

Banks for savings have enabled the smallest deposits to be securely preserved to poor people with the same sort of advantage which rich people derive from their money, that is, "Interest;" and a frugal expenditure will enable almost anybody to save "something."

That "something" may seem—as indeed it too generally does to poor people—so small as not to be worth saving; and on which account they continue, unnecessarily, to spend what they might save, and consequently always remain poor. It would be far better if they could be persuaded to regard it in the view of the great and wise Dr. Franklin, who observes, with his usual practical and good sense, that "Six pounds a year are but a groat a day." Let this groat a day be saved in youth, and long before age comes on it will become the representative of a capital sum of £120., which the good credit of him who has thus industriously saved the six pounds, may enable him to borrow for the purpose of commencing business. If he be so prudent as to save his groat a day, others will also be so prudent as to save their capital by lending it on the interest of the groats thus saved, and thus they will promote each other's prosperity.

It is in this way that wealth is made at the first, and afterwards made to accumulate so as ultimately to promote the welfare of both individuals and the community. To encourage such savings the government of this country,

with much wisdom and prudent regard to the interests of the people and of the country, receive large accumulations from the Savings' Banks and Friendly Societies, for which *interest* is paid at the usual rates. Such small savings may thus be conveniently made by frugal people, until they may require them for urgent purposes or sometimes for the purpose of adventuring in business; and it is much to be hoped that persons will avail themselves of this advantage: for not only is their temporal prosperity involved in their doing so, but, what is more important, nothing can more contribute to the moral conduct and reputable character of all persons, than such prudent regard to their interests in common life; because it secures them against all such habits and unwise expenditure which leads on to unwise and immoral courses of behaviour.

In the early periods of life, when health is good and the physical powers active and strong, then it is that young persons should find their happiness in a prudent regard to their future interests. The time will soon arrive when, as husbands and parents, they will want funds for the establishment of homes, the education of children, and the putting them out into life.

Can there be any comparison, under such circumstances, between the man who has earned such a fund by his industry and saved it by his frugality, and him who has spent his earnings as fast as he has made them? Can such a man as this latter look back upon the past with the happy consciousness that he is answering the ends of his being in this world, and realizing that promise which is assured to those who lead a godly life?

What must be the feelings of a man who, when nature prompts him to settle in life and become a member of

society, finds that while other persons have realized an independence, or at least such a character as, under the least favourable circumstances, will assure a permanent occupation and the goodwill of his more prosperous neighbours, he is reduced to the difficulty of a precarious subsistence, and must as often obtain it from charity or the *poor-rate*, as from his own labour.

It is indeed too much the habit of youth to begin life as only they can be entitled to end it; that is, to begin by expensive pleasures before they have realized the means of paying for them. Nothing can be more to be deplored than this; for if a man devote himself to pleasure at the season of life when it becomes him rather to find his pleasure in suitable and profitable occupation, the time must come when such pleasure must fail, and when, with the failure of his pleasure, he must inevitably lapse into indigence with all its attendant misfortunes.

Nor let it be said that because of the great disparities of fortune, and the difficulties of realizing an independence, it is not worth a man's while to waste life in unavailing efforts to accomplish such great improbabilities; for there can be no doubt whatever, but that a steady industry in such a country as this will realize a present maintenance and a future independence to all persons who possess, with their industrious dispositions, a fair competency to do the work which may be suitable for them; while such as are not so well endowed, and those who may be unfortunate, will, in all cases, be better off, after a fair though unsuccessful struggle in life, than idle and unprincipled persons can ever hope to be, because they have at least earned the sympathies of the benevolent, and will, most assuredly, partake of their assistance.

"Friendly Societies" are founded upon a principle of mutual assurance, and are well entitled to encouragement, not only as a means of securing greater benefits at a smaller cost than what the ordinary investments of capital can offer, but also as being—what their name implies—"Friendly Associations," that is, associations such that the member who requires the aid of the common fund, does so at the cost of those who are so fortunate as not to require it. If a person contribute for an allowance when ill, he does so on the favourable contingency that he may, nevertheless, escape illness altogether, while, in such case, he feels doubly compensated for his outlay; first, in the security which he has provided in case he should fall sick, and, secondly, in the satisfaction of having enabled a fellow-member who has fallen sick, to obtain a larger relief than he could do by any other means.

Friendly Societies are very numerous, and do, no doubt, promote a kindliness of feeling, as well as a spirit of independence amongst their members, to a considerable extent. Too many of them, indeed, are both ill-constructed and ill-conducted, offering advantages which can never, for any considerable length of time, be realized, and, on account of which, they become insolvent and break up—as I have known several do—after a few years, leaving the older members without resource; while the division of the fund which usually takes place on such occasions, serves only to encourage the habits of expenditure which its previous ill-management had promoted amongst the members, so long as there was but little sickness amongst them.

The only true principle on which a well-constituted Friendly Society can be constructed, is that of strict

mutual assurance: nor can its rates of payment for the advantages it is intended to secure, be regarded as safe, unless the casualties, on which they are made to depend, are susceptible of computation by way of average.

The usual advantages offered in these associations are allowances in sickness; annuities in age; sums of money on death; and endowments for children: all of which are susceptible of such computation,—and not only so—the government has, with great care and propriety, presented the public with both well-considered rules and the best constructed tables of rates of payment and allowances; and it would be well if they were more generally adopted, since as they are computed upon the most extensive and exact data, and offer no advantages but what experience can justify, they are not liable to those failures and disappointments which have so frequently and injuriously occurred in ill-constructed associations.

I have written the above few lines upon these associations and Savings' Banks, because they are means—and excellent means too—by which poor industrious people may assist the efforts they make for independence; and, as I have had some considerable acquaintance with the power and practical working of these institutions towards the accomplishment of that desirable result of a poor man's exertions, I have much confidence in here recommending them to all persons who may have the means and opportunity of connecting themselves with them.

CONCLUSION.

In the foregoing brief Essays, I do not pretend to have included every subject which may be involved in the term Social Economy; neither can I venture to offer these which I have selected, without a hope that they may be read with some measure of indulgence. I am not unaware of having fallen short of my own purposes as well as of that due exposition of such important subjects which might be expected of one who presumes to instruct others; and, while I regret this as arising from my own limited knowledge, I am also sensible of many errors in composition: but it appeared to me, that however education may be attended to, there is a remarkable unacquaintance with these subjects in almost all classes of persons, and particularly in those whose interests seem most dependent on a due and just appreciation of them, and upon whom accordingly I felt especially anxious to impress such considerations as might tend to render them content and happy in the discharge of their ordinary business and duties in life; for I considered that much of the unhappiness of working people, and the disaffected feeling attendant upon low wages and precarious employment, arise from their never having been taught and made to understand the realities of their social position, and made to see that it is not in human nature, nor according to the

providence of God, that unchequered prosperity should be the lot of man in this world, however this may be improved by the advantages of society.

Such a view of things might and—as I think—ought, to some extent, to form an element in the education of youth, who would afterwards come more easily to understand and appreciate the difficulties of life: but when these matters have failed to be taught, and the difficulties of life come to press heavily on working men, before they have been instructed to consider how they occur, while, in fact, they arise from those very necessities of our nature, which as, on the one hand, they constitute our trial in this world as moral and accountable beings, so, on the other, they are the source and groundwork of all that varied industry which enables man to live on the productions of his own labour,—what instruction can be more important and suitable for such persons than what applies itself to the circumstances of their social position, and teaches them both how to think and what to do.

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